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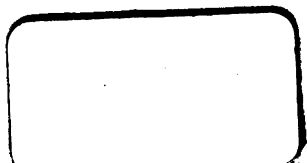


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W. L. Dow



Letter from the Rev. Dr. Brownlee.

OPEN CONVENTS, BY THEODORE DWIGHT.

This work, by Mr. Dwight, I have read with much interest. It presents a matter of grave and solemn reflection to every man who wishes well to our republic, and who is anxious that the rising generation should be such as will sustain and perpetuate our free institutions. It sets forth in a calm and enlightened appeal; the present growing and fatal influence of the foreign despotism that has been putting forth its efforts, by means of nunneries and Jesuit seminaries, to corrupt the principles and morals of our youth; and thence to overturn our free institutions.

And is there a solitary portion of our country where these questions are not plied with all the urgency of manifest danger on every good citizen's attention? Why are these exotic priests, whose supreme lord is at Rome, so anxiously benevolent as to covet the education of Protestant youth? Why such bowels of compassion upon the children of enlightened Protestants, when every one sees that countless millions of their own Roman Catholic children, at home and abroad, are perishing for lack of knowledge? Can he be a sincere lover of civil and religious liberty who surrenders the education of his sons and daughters to the slaves of the sternest despotism of Europe? Can it be patriotic to yield up our youth, the future fathers and mothers of our republic, to be trained up by the maxims and example of the

spiritual household troops of the Holy Alliance? Is it befitting an enlightened American citizen to pass by our own numerous and distinguished literary institutions, and to place his children under the care of bigoted Romanists, the ablest of whom are, to speak within due bounds, at least a century behind the rich attainments and accomplished literature of Protestant professors? Can a true republican patronize these self-styled seminaries, which are, in fact, disguised branches of foreign inquisitions? Can a noble-minded republican deliver his children over to these foreign mercenaries, who enforce their discipline by cells and dungeons; by their gags, and chains, and tortures? Can a freeman permit his children to be doomed prisoners under lock and key; shut up from the inspection of magistrates and guardians, and even parents? Has he the heart of a father, or a man, who aids in the conspiracy to crush and degrade the young mind? Can a parent ever forgive himself, who aids and abets priests and nuns in the degrading work of making noble and ingenuous youths and delicate young ladies to approach their lordly teachers only on their bended knees; and to kiss the floor, and even the very feet of "Ladies Superior" and "the bishops;" nay, even to crouch in the dust, and make the sign of the cross on the floor with their tongues!

In one word, can the honest patriot lend his influence to sustain nunneries and Jesuit seminaries, created avowedly for the purpose of disseminating the principles of unmitigated despotism?

Can a Protestant lend his aid in any way to sustain institutions organized expressly for the

purpose of extinguishing "the Blessed Reformation;" and with it, the holy light of science, liberty, and pure religion?

Can a Christian permit himself to support, far less to place his dear children in, a nunnery and in a Jesuit seminary, which have been manifestly shown to all the world to be the dens of ignorance, pollution, cruelty, and horrid murders?

To those who wish to be guided in the proper answers to these inquiries, and who feel deeply for their country and the church of God, I beg leave earnestly to recommend Mr. Dwight's book on *Open Convents*. It will give ample satisfaction: and I shall be under a mistake if it does not fairly guide the candid reader to this irresistible conclusion,—namely:—That every nunnery, and every Jesuit seminary throughout the land, should, by law, be forthwith thrown open to public inspection; and every part of them, even their most secret chambers, cells, subterranean passages, and dungeons, made, at all times, perfectly accessible to all parties concerned: Or, as the only alternative, be forthwith shut up, and their inmates, by due process of law, dispersed, like every other combination of lawless and dangerous men!

W. C. BROWNLEE,

New-York, May 25, 1836.

From S. F. B. Morse, Esq.

MESSRS. VAN NOSTRAND & DWIGHT,
GENTLEMEN,

I have examined the little volume which you put into my hands, entitled "*OPEN CONVENTS*," edited by Theodore Dwight, Esq. with great

pleasure. It is a valuable collation of evidence on the subject of Convents, showing, in the clearest manner, the hollowness, and the depravity and danger of the Convent system.

At a time when the most strenuous efforts are making by *Foreign governments* to spread the *Papal system* throughout the United States, every method calculated to direct the attention of the people to the means by which *this great Foreign Political manœuvre* is to be accomplished, is deserving of the encouragement of the American people. Convents and seminaries under the direction of Roman Catholics cannot be viewed with too much or undeserved jealousy. While so many in our Protestant community have been made the easy dupes of those Foreign agents, so well skilled in "*all deceivableness of unrighteousness*," and have been caught in their snares, it is gratifying to know, by daily increasing evidence, that the mass of the American people have not yet lost their ancient character for sagacity and vigilance; and that they are already detecting the glosses by which these foreign traps to catch the young would deceive them into the surrender of their civil and religious liberties.

I cannot but believe the work of Mr. Dwight will be extensively read, and be instrumental of much good.

With respect, gentlemen,

Your most obedient Servant,

SAM. F. B. MORSE.

New-York City University, May 25, 1836.

OPEN CONVENTS:

OR

NUNNERIES AND POPISH SEMINARIES

DANGEROUS

TO THE

MORALS, AND DEGRADING TO THE CHARACTER

OF A

REPUBLICAN COMMUNITY.

BY THEODORE DWIGHT.

NEW-YORK:

VAN NOSTRAND AND DWIGHT,

No. 146 Nassau-street.

1836.

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CHAPTER I.

REASONS why the attention of people in the United States has been recently directed towards Roman Catholic institutions for education.—The destruction of the Convent at Charlestown.—Books.—“Six Months in a Convent,” by Miss Reed.—“Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk.”—Extracts from “Six Months in a Convent,” proving that secrecy and abject submission were fundamental rules in the Charlestown Nunnery.

A VARIETY of circumstances and events have occurred within a few years past, which have drawn the public attention to the character, institutions, and objects of the Roman Catholics in the United States; and particularly to their convents, and seminaries for the education of females. In August, 1834, a convent, established at Charlestown in Massachusetts, was destroyed by a mob, who acted on the belief, that under the system of penances established by the ecclesiastical authorities of that church, great severities were practised upon the inmates of the Institution; and under the impulse of the highly excited feelings which such a belief was calculated to produce, assembled

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from the neighbourhood and set fire to the buildings, which, before any check could be given to their progress, were destroyed.

Some time afterwards, a book was published by a young woman of the name of Reed, who had passed a considerable period in that Institution, under the title of "*Six Months in a Convent; by Rebecca Teresa Reed.*" This person belonged to a Protestant family, but had become in some measure enamoured with the Catholic religion; and was induced to enter the Convent with the view of eventually becoming a recluse or nun. During her residence she had opportunity to become acquainted with many of the regulations by which it was governed, and with the practices of those who had the oversight of the Institution. Such, however, was the effect of experience upon her own mind, that she abandoned the idea of becoming a nun, and with some difficulty escaped from the Convent and returned to her friends, and to the Protestant faith, in which she was born and had been educated. In this book Miss Reed discloses many things which she alleges she saw while among the Ursulines, which, when brought before the community, made a deep impression upon the public mind and feelings. A more

specific account of the contents of parts of this book will be given hereafter.

Some time after the publication of "*Six Months in a Convent*," an answer to it appeared, in the name of the "Lady Superior of the Convent," in which many of the statements made by Miss Reed are denied, and she is repeatedly charged with having published falsehoods concerning the superintendants of the Convent, and of the treatment of the nuns and novices, as well as of the pupils of the school or seminary connected with it.

This produced a third publication, entitled "*Supplement to Six Months in a Convent*," the object of which was to confirm the truth of Miss Reed's narrative by facts and the testimony of others. This last work was written with uncommon ability to say the least, and goes far towards the accomplishment of the object for which it was written.

Since the commencement of the present year, a book has been published in the city of New-York, under the title of "*Awful Disclosures ; by Maria Monk*." This work professes to give a plain, unvarnished account of the enormities practised in a Convent in Montreal, in Lower Canada, of which Miss Monk was for some

years an inmate—first in the character of a Novice, and afterwards in that of a Nun. If this book is entitled to credit, no person who has any regard for female virtue or sound morals, can hesitate for a moment to say that these Catholic institutions demand, of every community where they exist, a strict inspection and oversight, so that such enormities as are charged against them should not be suffered to pass unnoticed and unpunished. Breaches of the wholesome laws of society ought not to be tolerated among Catholics any more than among Protestants. Nor does the idea of toleration extend so far as to justify the greatest outrages upon the morals of the public, or even to extenuate the perpetration of the most heinous crimes in the penal code.

It will, in the first place, be necessary to examine into the nature of the charges which are contained in the publications alluded to against Catholic Convents and Seminaries; and in the second, to inquire whether they are supported by such a degree of evidence as to make it the duty of the legislatures of the several states to interpose their authority, and guard against the commission of such outrages against both law and morals.

Having given an account of the means used to induce her to enter the Convent, Miss Reed says :—" After this, she (the Lady Superior) wrote a letter to my father, of the contents of which I was then ignorant, but have since learned that it contained offers of two or three quarters' schooling free of expense. My father says he treated it with contempt ; and his answer by the bearer was briefly this : he wished me to have nothing to do with that Institution ; that my friends would prefer my going to a Protestant seminary. At my next interview with the Superior, she, however, told me my father had become reconciled to my remaining with them two or three quarters ; after which time he would inform me whether he could consent to have me stay there longer as a teacher of music." Again :—" She asked me, if I should come *without the consent of my Boston friends*, if I supposed they would *insert any thing in the public papers*, or *make any disturbance*, or *come there for me* ? to which I replied, I thought not. After preparing myself for a public reception, I visited the Superior, when she said, if I would place myself under her care from this time, she would protect me for ever ; and *particularly from the persecution of the 'heterodox'* ; and she

looked to heaven above for her reward. She then stated that the Bishop had concluded to receive me, not as a member of the public department, but as a 'Novice,' *which would screen me from the questions of the Protestant scholars.* She also added, that I should be received as the other sisters were, and that we were to support ourselves by our talents and industry. I answered that I should like those conditions best. She then desired me to kneel down, and take the following obligation :—' I do, with the grace and assistance of Almighty God, renounce the world for ever, and place myself under your protection, from this day to consecrate myself to his honour and glory in the house of God, and *to do whatever obedience prescribes, and tell no one of this obligation but Mr. B. in confession.*' "

Here it is apparent that secrecy was the great object which the Lady Superior had in view in the course she was pursuing in relation to Miss Reed. She would protect her pupil from *the persecution of the heterodox*—meaning, undoubtedly, her family and friends ; as she had just before inquired of Miss Reed if she supposed, if she came to the Convent without the consent of her Boston friends, the latter would publish any

thing in the public papers, or make any disturbance, or come to the Convent after her. The Bishop, also, had concluded not to receive Miss Reed as a member of *the public department*, but as a "Novice," *which would screen her from the questions of the Protestant scholars.* And in the form of the oath which the Lady Superior administered to Miss Reed, the latter is made to swear that *she would do whatever obedience prescribed ; and tell no one of the obligation she had assumed, except her Confessor.*

Miss Reed gives a double series of rules which were established in the Convent by the reverend Mother, (the Lady Superior,) and secondly those of St. Augustine and St. Ursula. The following are by the Lady Superior :

" 1. To rise on the appearance of the Superior.

2. When reprimanded, to kneel at once, and kiss the floor, until the signal be given to rise.

3. When speaking of the Superior, to say, Our Mother ; when speaking to her, and the professed Choir Religieuse, Ma mere ; to say Sister when speaking to the Novices ; of them, Miss ; and of the professed Choir, Mrs. ; to say *our*, or *ours*, instead of *my* or *mine*.

4. To say "Ave Maria" every time we enter the Community.

5. Before entering any room, to give *three* knocks on the door, accompanied by some religious ejaculation, and wait until they are answered by three from within.

6. Not to lift our eyes while walking in the passage ways ; also, never to touch each other's hands.

7. To stand while spoken to by the Bishop or Superior, and kneel while speaking to them ; to speak in a particular tone.

8. If necessary to speak to the Superior during a time of silence, approach her kneeling, and speak in whispers.

9. Never leave a room without permission, giving at the same time our reasons.

10. To rise and say the "Hour" every time the clock strikes, except when the Bishop is present, who, if he wishes, makes the signal."

St. Augustine's rules are as follows —

"1. To kneel in the presence of the Bishop, until his signal to rise.

2. Never to gratify our appetites, except with his holiness the Bishop's, or a Father Confessor's permission.

3. Never to approach or look out of the window of the Monastery.

4. To sprinkle our couches every night with holy water.

5. Not to make a noise in walking over the monastery.

6. To wear sandals and hair-cloth ; to inflict punishment upon ourselves with our girdles, in imitation of a Saint.

7. To sleep on a hard mattress or couch, with one coverlet.

8. To walk with pebbles in our shoes, or walk kneeling until a wound is produced.

9. Never to gratify our curiosity, or exercise our thoughts on any subject, without our spiritual director's knowledge and advice. Never to desire food or water between portions.

10. Every time, on leaving the community, to take holy water from the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and make the sign of the cross.

11. If a *Religieuse* persist in disobeying the Superior, she is to be brought before the Bishop of the diocese, and *punished as he shall think proper*. Never to smile except at recreation, nor even then, contrary to religious decorum.

12. Should the honoured mother, the Superior, detect a *Religieuse* whose mind is occupied

with worldly thoughts, or who is negligent in observing the rules of the Monastery, which are requisite and necessary to her perseverance and perfection in a religious life, she would immediately cause her to retire to her cell, where she should enter into a retreat."

CHAPTER II.

FURTHER Extracts from "Six Months in a Convent."—
Confessions to the Superior.—Degrading Ceremonies.—Diet.—The Superior's base treatment of Miss Mary Francis.

MISS REED then gives an account of performing confessions to the Superior, which took place regularly on Fridays. It is as follows:—
"The room is first darkened, and one lighted wax taper is placed upon the Superior's throne; and she is considered as filling the place or station of the Blessed Virgin. After taking their places in the greatest order and silence, the Religiouses respond. Then the lectress reads from a book, called Rules for the Ursuline Order, by Saint Ursula, about complaining of the cold, our clothing, food, &c. &c. They sit on

their feet during the reading, a posture *extremely painful*. The reading finished, the Superior whispers to the Sisters to approach her separately, which they do ; each in her turn approaches, and repeats the following : “ Our Mother, we acknowledge that we have been guilty of breaking the rules of our *Holy Order*, by lifting our eyes while walking in the passage-ways ; in neglecting to take holy water on entering the community and choir ; failing in respect to our Superior and veneration to our Father ; failing in religious decorum, and in respect to our vows—poverty and obedience ; for which we most humbly ask pardon of God, penance and forgiveness of you, our Holy Mother.” As each one finishes, the Mother gives her advice and penances, and her blessing ; they then *kiss her feet*, and sometimes *make the cross with their tongues on the floor* ; then making their inclination, they retire to the choir to perform the penances.

Miss Reed describes the ceremonies at table, after their meals, as follows : “ When the signal is given, each one rolls up the knife and fork in the napkin, and lays it as she found it ; and the one whose turn it is to do so, *after kissing*

the floor as a token of humility, takes from the drawer a white apron," &c.

"After this, the Superior makes a signal, and the lecturess and before-mentioned *Religieuses* kneel in the middle of the floor and kiss it."

Soon after she became an inmate of the Convent, the Bishop told her that her sister had been to see if she had taken the veil, or had any thoughts of taking it. "He then told me the difference between a holy life and a worldly life; said the Devil would assail me as he did Saint Teresa, and make me think I ought to go back to the world; and make me offers of worldly pleasures, and promise me happiness. In order to prevent this, I must watch and pray all the time, and banish entirely worldly thoughts from my mind; and throw holy water at the evil spirits, and challenge them to come if they dare. Perceiving the unpleasant effect this had on my feelings, he portrayed in lively colours the happiness which would flow from my resisting the evil spirits, and what a crown of glory would be placed on my head by the angels."

According to her Confessor's orders, she took upon herself many austere penances; but the Superior, noticing her exhaustion from that

cause, released her from them for a time, saying that she was a favoured one.

Miss Reed describes the diet in the Convent in the following manner :—" Our diet consisted of the plainest kind of food, principally of vegetable soups, Indian puddings, and, very seldom, meat. Our tea was made of herbs, sometimes of the bitterest kind. We partook of this diet in imitation of the Holy Fathers of the Desert, to mortify our appetites. Pumpkins, stewed with molasses and water, served us sometimes as a dessert. Occasionally we had mouldy bread to eat. A very insignificant piece of butter was sometimes placed on our plates. The Superior's diet was far better than ours ; sometimes it was sumptuous, wine not excepted. I ascertained this, as I occasionally, in turn, went round to gather the fragments. She sent me, on two occasions, some apple parings to eat, as part of my portion. Sometimes the Religieuses deny themselves any diet ; prostrate, kiss the feet of those who remain at table, performing various kinds of penance, while the others are eating and listening to the reading."

She makes the following remarks respecting one of the inmates of the Convent :

"I was particularly hurt at witnessing the

austerities put on a Religieuse, named Sister Mary Magdalene, who came from Ireland. Once, while reciting the office, she, by accident or losing breath, spoke in a lower key than she should ; at a signal from the Superior she fell prostrate before her desk, and remained so for one hour, until the office was finished, when she had permission to rise.”—“Soon after this, in private confession to the Superior, she appeared determined to know my thoughts, and put many questions to me that were hard to answer. I would here remark that this is the practice at auricular confessions. She told me to beg the intercession of my patron saint, of the Blessed Virgin, and Saint Ursula. I complained to her of my strength’s failing, and of my diet not being such as I was used to ; she replied, that a Religieuse should have no choice, and that I should have left my feelings in the world ; and she immediately imposed the following penances :—*to make the sign of the cross on the floor with my tongue*, and to eat a *crust of bread* in the morning for my portion.”

When preparations were making for her taking the vows of a Religieuse, she says—“My reception was to take place *privately*, because we wished to keep my father ignorant

of the manner in which I had been received, and because he might hear of it should it take place publicly ; as she had before said, I was not eighteen, and he could prevent my going there. They said he could not prevent me, as I was now of age."

Again, Miss Reed says—" She (the Superior) asked me what I thought was the reason of my teacher's crying (her name was Miss Mary Francis) ; I replied, I did not know. She said it was the operation of the Holy Spirit, and her devotional feelings were very deep.

" The next day, while we were at our recreations, Miss Mary Francis appeared in great distress from some cause, and in tears. She soon after pencilled a few lines, and approached the Superior kneeling, &c., and presenting the paper ; she appeared confused and very angry, and bade her take a seat. After this the Superior thought it necessary for me to retire to the infirmary and take an emetic, which I did the next day. The day after this I had orders to take medicine, which I was averse to ; and on my declining, the infirmarian made the sign of the cross a number of times, and told me it was the Superior's orders, and I could not avoid taking a part of it. I remained in the infirmary two

days without a fire, and the weather was very cold. I had then permission to go to the choir, where I immediately fainted ; at which the Superior was angry, and said in a whisper she had told me *I ought not to have any feelings.*

“ For awhile Sister Mary Francis was not present at the office and recreations as usual, and the Superior gave, as a reason for her absence, that she was ill. But it will be necessary for me to leave for a moment Miss Mary Francis, and speak of Miss Mary Magdalene. The latter was set over me as a teacher in the room of Mary Francis, whom I then supposed to be sick ; but I afterwards learned *that she was confined*, that she might have a better opportunity to clear herself of the temptations of Satan. Sister Mary Magdalene told me she was about to leave this world, and wished to give me some advice. She said she thought it was God’s will to take her to himself. After reminding me of the respect due to the Superior, and of my negligence in not kissing the floor in the choir, and of my looking up while in the passages, she then spake of Sister Mary Francis ; said she would soon be able to give me lessons as before ; but wished to know which of the novices I thought had the best vocation for a religious

life, and which one would be most likely to return to the world. To the latter I replied, 'Sister Mary Francis.' She asked why. I said she did not appear to observe the rules so strictly as the others. She asked me if that would be any inducement for me. I replied, 'No, not *that*.' She appeared unable to talk; but, notwithstanding her weak state and trembling hands, she sewed all the time. I told her it gave me pain to see her distress herself so. With a peculiar emphasis she said, '*Sister, obedience!*' and in a very affecting manner made the sign of the cross.

"While at my lessons one day, in the hours of silence, the Superior and Mother Assistant came, wishing me to tell them where Miss Mary Francis was. I replied I had not seen her. They left the room, and soon Miss Mary Francis entered in tears. The Superior followed, and seizing her by the arm, shook her violently, threatening to punish her for disobedience, and wished she had *a cell austere enough* to put her in; and exclaimed, 'Shame! shame! you disedify Miss Mary Agnes.' She then told her not to feign sickness again, but to show by her appetite her illness. After the penance of kissing the floor, &c., she gave her a number of

prayers to copy for the Protestant scholars ; and from that time we were watched with the strictest scrutiny. The next day the Superior gave me permission to write to my father. She said Miss Mary Francis was crazy, and she should not keep her in the Convent more than a month longer if she did not reform."

After this Miss Reed states that the Superior handed a letter to the Mother Assistant, which she said was from a Miss J. of New-York, Miss Mary Francis's aunt, to read. The substance of it was, that Miss J. had received the Superior's letter, and was sorry to have recommended Miss Mary Francis to her, and hoped she would not long be troubled with her. Miss Reed endeavoured for some time to persuade Miss Francis to tell her what was the cause of her unhappiness ; and at length, after repeated solicitations, she said—" I am kept here by the Superior, through selfish motives, as a teacher, *under a slavish fear*, and against my will. I have written several letters to my father, and have received no satisfactory answer ; and I have for a long time felt dissatisfied with my situation. The Superior has failed in fulfilling her promise, not complying with the conditions on which I was received ; which were, that as

she was in need of a teacher, particularly in French and music, I might take the white veil, and leave whenever I chose ; and my taking the veil, ' as it was only a custom,' should not compel me ; and that my obligation should not be binding. My father thinks I can leave at any time, for I do not believe he has received my letters, and that letter you have heard read as Miss J.'s is a *forged one*."

At a subsequent conversation, Miss Francis repeated the declaration that the letter read as from Mrs. J. was a forged one ; and she added, that if her father knew her sufferings and the treatment she received from the Superior, he would prosecute her ; and that *she feared the Superior as she did a serpent*. Miss Reed adds, that, " At recreation the Superior observed that Miss Mary Francis had no vocation for a religious life, as she had *refused* to attend the offices and prayers. At our next interview, I inquired of Mary Francis if she had *refused* to attend prayers ? she replied, no ; that the Superior had discovered her intention to escape, and had *forbidden* her attending offices, communion, and confession, for exposing her feelings before the Religieuses ; and that the Superior had imposed pénance upon her."

i. h. Dow

CHAPTER III.

EXTRACTS from "Six Months in a Convent," continued—
 The Superior's inhuman treatment of a young lady called Mary Magdalene.—Her death.—The Bishop's cold-hearted remarks.—Plot to carry off Miss Reed to Canada.—Her escape from the Nunnery.—Remarks.

ALLUDING to the case of Mary Magdalene, Miss Reed says—"One day she came from the refectory, and being so much exhausted as to be hardly able to ascend the stairs, I offered to assist her, and the Superior reprimanded me for it, saying her weakness was feigned, and that my *pity* was false pity. She then said to Sister Magdalene, in a tone of 'displeasure, if she did not make herself of use to the 'Community,' she would send her back to Ireland; on which Mary Magdalene rose and said, 'Ma mere, I would like ——.' The Superior cut short what she was going to say by *stamping upon the floor*, and, *demanding who gave her permission to speak*, imposed on her the penance of kissing the floor. The Superior after this imposed hardships which she was hardly able to sustain; frequently reminding her that she had but a short

time to work out her salvation, and that she must do better if she did not wish to suffer in purgatory."

To this is added, that the next time the Bishop visited us, he was in unusually high spirits and very sociable ; and he related several stories, which are not worthy of notice in this place. He again asked Sister Magdalene when she thought of going to that happy place, to receive her crown of glory. She replied, " Before the celebration of our divine Redeemer's birth, my Lord." He said she ought to be very thankful that she was called so soon.

After relating a variety of occurrences, Miss Reed says,—“ Meanwhile, sister Mary Magdalene was employed in the refectory. According to the Bishop, she was a saint, and he said there was a saint's body in the tomb, one of the late sisters, which remained undecayed. I heard the Superior, about this time, tell Miss Mary Magdalene to burn all her treasures, or she would suffer in purgatory for her self-love, and she was afraid she did not suffer patiently, for she appeared romantic. Mary Magdalene fell prostrate at the Superior's feet, and said she would fulfil any command that should be laid upon her. The Superior gave her a penance to kiss the

feet of all the Religieuses, and asked them to say an Ave and a Pater for her ; after which she lay prostrate in the refectory until the Angelus was rung. One communion morning, as I rose and was dressing, I took some water, as usual, to rinse my mouth, and all at once Mary Magdalene appeared greatly agitated, and even in agony ; made signs and crosses that I should commit sacrilege were I then to approach the communion ; and I then recollected that nothing must be taken into the mouth on the morning before the sacrament. I relate this to show the state of her mind. The Superior one day requested the Mother Assistant to get the keys of the tomb, and to have a good place prepared for Mary Magdalene, who forced a smile, saying, she should prefer hers near the undecayed saint's bed.

“ She lived rather longer than was expected, but her penances were not remitted. She would frequently kneel and prostrate all night long in the cold infirmary, saying her rosary and other penances, one or two of which I will mention. She wore *next her heart a metallic plate, in imitation of a crown of thorns*, from which I was given to understand she suffered a sort of martyrdom. This I often saw her kiss and lay on

the altar of the crucifix as she retired. Another penance was, the reclining upon a mattress more like a table than a bed. A day or two after this, the Superior, Mother Assistant, and Mary Benedict, ridiculed the appearance of Mary Magdalene, because of the dropsy, which prevented her appearing graceful, and because she was disappointed in not going to heaven sooner.

“While in the Convent I asked once or twice for a Bible, but never received any, and never saw one while there. The Bishop often said that the laity were not qualified to expound the Scriptures, and that the *successors* of the apostles *alone* were authorised to interpret them, &c.

“The Bishop, in one of his visits, spoke particularly of the cholera. He told us we must watch and pray more fervently, or ‘*the old Scratch would snatch us off with the cholera.*’ It was recreation hour, but Mary Magdalene was at work in the refectory. When she came to the community, she appeared like a person in spasms; she tried to say ‘Ave Maria,’ and immediately fainted: we were all very much alarmed. At that moment the bell called us to the choir for visitation and vespers. When I retired, I felt much hurt to

see Mary Magdalene in the cold infirmary, but did not dare to express my feelings. The next day, it being my turn to see that all the vessels which contained holy water were filled, &c. I had an opportunity of looking at Mary Magdalene. Her eyes partly open, and her face very purple; she lay pretty still. I did not dare to speak to her, supposing she would think it a duty to tell of it, as it would be an infraction of the rules. The next night I lay thinking of her, when I was suddenly startled, hearing a rattling noise, as I thought, in her throat. Very soon Sister Martha (the sick Lay Nun) arose, and coming to her, said, 'Jesus! Mary! Joseph! receive her soul;' and rang the bell three times. The spirit of the gentle Magdalene had departed."

Again: "Some days after this, the Superior sent for me to practise music, and then made a signal for me to follow her into the Bishop's room. When I had kissed her feet, she desired to know why I cried at my practice in the choir. I rather imprudently answered, 'I could not tell; I did not cry much.' It then struck me she could not have seen me, as I was *alone*. I said I was very cold, particularly my feet; and I had been practising 'Blue-eyed Mary,' and was affected

by the words. She said that what I asserted was false, and commanded me to tell her the true cause *in a moment*; and pulling the handkerchief from my hand, she bade me kneel and tell her at once, or I should be punished. I was so frightened by the threats and manner of the Superior, that I sobbed aloud, and blood gushed from my nose and mouth. She then seized and shook me by the arm, and seated me, saying, 'Hush! be calm, or the young ladies may hear you as they pass the door to go to their practice.' She asked me again and again to tell her why I shed tears in the choir, and why I felt such a repugnance to communicate my thoughts. I replied, because I had made a promise not to tell, and I could not break it. The Superior turned pale, but suppressing her feelings, bade me break that promise directly, and asked to whom I had made it. I replied, I could not tell any one but my Confessor. Says she, embracing me, 'What, my dear sister, not obey your Superior! tell me, my dear, and I will stand responsible for you before the judgment seat. To whom did you make the promise? To Mary Magdalene or Mary Francis?' After some further conversation, the Superior left Miss Reed, that the latter might compose herself; and returning, "She asked me," says Miss

Reed, "if I knew where I was, and had concluded to obey her, or break my vow of obedience and be severely punished. I answered, 'No, Ma mere, I will tell all I can remember;' for I judged from her threats and looks that I should be confined in a cellar, or have something more severe than usual inflicted on me. The rules of the order also led me to think so."

At a subsequent period, Miss Reed. says :—
 "While busily employed, I heard the adjoining door open, and the Bishop's voice distinctly. Being conscious that I was there at the wrong hour, I kept as still as possible, lest I should be discovered. While in this room I overheard the following conversation between the Bishop and the Superior. The Bishop, after taking snuff in his usual manner, began by saying, 'Well, well, what does Agnes * say? how does she appear?' I heard distinctly from the Superior in reply, that, 'according to all appearances, she is either possessed of *insensibility* or great *self-command*.' The Bishop walked about the room, seeming much displeased with the Superior, and cast many severe and improper reflections upon Mary Francis, who, it was known, had influenced me; all which his Lordship will well re-

* Miss Reed's Catholic name.

member. He then told the Superior that the establishment was in its infancy ; and that it would not do to have such reports go abroad as these persons would carry ; that Agnes must be taken care of ; that *they had better send her to Canada, and that a carriage could cross the line in two or three days.* He added, by way of repetition, that it would not do for the Protestants to get hold of those things and make another 'fuss.' He then gave the Superior instructions how to entice me into the carriage, and they soon both left the room and I heard no more."

A short time afterwards, Miss Reed says, she heard a carriage drive to the door of the Convent, and the Superior soon entered the room where she was, and asked her "What she thought of going to see her friends." Miss Reed asked what friends. The Superior said, you would like to to see your friends Mrs. G. and Father B. and talk with them respecting your call to another order ; and immediately began to take off Miss Reed's dress, telling her she was in haste, and a carriage was waiting to convey her to her friends. Miss Reed said she had rather see them at the Convent first. The Superior then left the room, but soon returned, and asked Miss Reed if she had made up her mind to go. She answered no.

The Superior then said she had failed in obedience to her, and as she had often talked of going to another order with such a person as Mary Francis, she had better go immediately. After some further conversation, and manifesting a good deal of passion, she mentioned that the carriage was still waiting. Miss Reed still declined going, as she was convinced their object was not to carry her to see her friends, but directly to Canada ; but said she would meditate on it some time longer. The Superior then rather emphatically said, " You can meditate on it if you please, and do as you like about going to see your friends ;" and then told her that her sister had been there, but did not wish to see her. She then gave Miss Reed a heavy penance to perform.

Not long after this, Miss Reed effected her escape, and took refuge in the house of a Mrs. G. where Priest B. made her two visits. At the second, he requested her, as she valued her religion and reputation, to take his advice. " I told him," says Miss Reed, " that I wished none of his assistance or advice ; that I should go to my brother's, at East Cambridge, as soon as possible ; that as it respected my religion, I did not believe in one which justified its followers in doing wrong ; and that I was not at all con-

cerned that my reputation would be injured on that account by returning to the world. He affected considerable contempt for my aged parent, and ridiculed many things which he had heard of my father. And he said, is it possible that a young lady wishes to have her name made public? I answered, you very well know I should shrink from such a thing, but I should rather return to the world and expose myself to its scorn, than remain subject to the commands of a tyrant. Then, said he, if you are determined to return to the world, you may go to ruin there for all I can do ; and rely upon it, you will shed tears of blood in consequence of the step you have taken, if you do not repent and confess all at the secret tribunal of God. I told him that I should confess to none but God, and that my conscience prompted me to do as I had done. He asked me if I would go with him to the Superior, as she wanted to see me. I replied no, I will not, for I believe you or any other Catholic would take my life were it in your power, as truly as I believe I am living, and I will not trust myself in your clutches again. At these words he turned pale, and asked me what I had seen at the Convent that made me think so. I refused to say any more, and retired at his exclamation that it would be death to me."

Miss Reed afterwards saw Priest B., who in the course of conversation said that she could not but know that the step she had taken would be a great injury to the Convent. In reply to which she said it was not to be charged to her, but to the Superior and Bishop, who by their conduct had compelled her to take that step.

Shortly after the death of Mary Magdalene, when at confession to the Bishop, Miss Reed says, that when questioning her concerning the cause of her being discontented at the convent, "He asked me if it was any thing connected with the sickness and death of Mary Magdalene? I told him No, not that in particular; I do not like the Superior. He said I must tell him instantly *all the wicked thoughts* that had disturbed my mind, and *asked me various improper questions, the meaning of which I did not then understand, and which I decline mentioning.*"

It is perfectly apparent, from the preceding conversations, that the great ground of apprehension with the Bishop, the Priest, and the Lady Superior was, that in some way or other the reputation of the Convent would suffer if the true state of things concerning it was known. It was feared that something might be published

in the papers about them ; that as the establishment was in its infancy, it would not do to have such reports as Miss Francis and Miss Reed would carry with them, get abroad ; that Agnes, that is Miss Reed, must be taken care of, and that they had better send her to Canada ; and he added that a carriage could cross the line in two or three days.

And it would seem, from the circumstance that a few days afterwards a carriage actually came to the door of the Convent, and the Lady Superior was very urgent that Miss Reed should ride in it to her friends to consult with them about the propriety and expediency of her being *called to another order*, that the Bishop was serious in the proposition to have her conveyed across the line. It is hardly to be believed that the Lady Superior, who had taken such pains to prevent Miss Reed's friends from seeing her in the Convent, was sincerely desirous of carrying her to visit those friends who had from the first strenuously opposed her going into the Convent, or having any thing to do with the Catholics or their religion when she was known to be desirous of leaving the Convent.

Some time after the publication of "Six Months in a Convent," a pamphlet appeared un-

der the title of "*An Answer to Six Months in a Convent, Exposing its Falsehood and manifold Absurdities. By the Lady Superior.*" The general style and tone of this work reflect but little credit on either the temper or manners of the "Lady" whose name appears in the title-page as its author. It certainly contains many charges of misrepresentation and falsehood against the author of "*Six Months in a Convent*;" but as they are generally dependent for their correctness upon the naked and unsupported assertions of the Lady Superior, the most favourable light in which they can be placed is that of her mere declarations against those of Miss Reed; the weight of evidence, therefore, may be considered as equal. But when the reply to her answer is examined, it will be found that the Lady Superior's claim to credit is materially lessened. In a variety of instances she appears to have had too little regard to the truth as well as to consistency—a circumstance which must necessarily impair her credibility—and this is sufficient to render her testimony at least doubtful, and to turn the scale in favour of Miss Reed.

At the same time it is not necessary, on the present occasion, that the absolute truth of

Miss Reed's book should be demonstrated. Probability is sufficient to answer the purpose for which this work is prepared. That in respect to credibility it reaches that point, cannot be doubted.

CHAPTER IV.

EXTRACTS from Miss Monk's "Awful Disclosures" concerning the Black Nunnery of Montreal.—Vows required of her after taking the veil.—Criminal treatment received from Roman priests. The iniquitous practices of priests and nuns.—Deceptions practised by the Superior.

Miss Monk's book details circumstances and transactions of a much more extraordinary character than any that are contained in the publication of Miss Reed. This young woman states herself to be a native of Lower Canada, and for a considerable part of her life a resident of Montreal. After having passed through her noviciate, she was regularly admitted into the Convent of Black Nuns in that city, and took the veil; and the book is principally made up of a narration of what she saw and experienced whilst a member of that society.

Having given an account of the ceremony of

taking the veil, she says, " After taking the vows, I proceeded to a small apartment behind the altar, accompanied by four nuns, where was a coffin prepared, with my nun name engraved upon it,

SAINT EUSTACE.

" My companions lifted it by four handles attached to it; while I threw off my dress and put on that of a nun of Sœur Bourgeoise ; and then we all returned to the chapel. I proceeded first, and was followed by the four nuns ; the Bishop naming a number of worldly pleasures in rapid succession, in reply to which I as rapidly repeated—I renounce, I renounce, I renounce.

" The coffin was then placed in front of the altar, and I advanced to place myself in it. This coffin was to be deposited, after the ceremony, in an outhouse, to be preserved until my death, when it was to receive my corpse. There were reflections which I naturally made at that time, but I stepped in, extended myself, and lay still. A pillow had been placed at the head of the coffin to support my head in a comfortable position. A large thick, black cloth was then spread over me, and the chanting of the Latin hymns immediately commenced."

Having finished her account of this ceremony, she says, " The Superior now informed me, that having taken the black veil, it only remained that I should swear the three oaths customary on becoming a nun ; and that some explanations would be necessary from her. I was now, she told me, to have access to every part of the edifice, *even to the cellar*, where two of the sisters were imprisoned for causes which she did not mention. I must be informed that one of my great duties was *to obey the priests in all things* ; and this I soon learnt, to my utter astonishment and horror, was *to live in the practice of criminal intercourse with them*. I expressed some of the feelings which this announcement excited in me, which came upon me like a flash of lightning : but the only effect was to set her arguing *with me in favour of the crime, representing it as a virtue acceptable to God and honourable to me*. The priests, she said, were not situated like other men, being forbidden to marry, while they lived secluded, laborious, and self-denying lives for our salvation. They might, indeed, be considered *our saviours*, as without their services we could not obtain pardon of sin, and must go to hell.

" From what she said, I could draw no other

conclusion, but that I was required to act like the most abandoned of beings, and that all my future associates were habitually guilty of the most heinous and detestable crimes. When I repeated my expressions of surprise and horror, she told me that *such feelings were very common at first*, and that *many other nuns had expressed themselves as I did*, who had long since *changed their minds*. She even said, that on her entrance into the nunnery *she had felt like me*.

"Doubts, she declared, were among our greatest enemies. They would lead us to question *every point of duty*, and induce us to waver at every step. They arose only from remaining imperfection, and were always evidence of sin. Our only way was to dismiss them immediately, repent, and confess them. They were deadly sins, and would condemn us to hell if we should die without confessing them. *Priests, she insisted, could not sin*. It was a *thing impossible*. Every thing they did, and wished, was of course right.

"She gave me another piece of information, which excited other feelings in me scarcely less dreadful. Infants were sometimes born in the Convent, but they were always baptized and *immediately strangled* ! This secured their ever-

lasting happiness ; for the baptism purified them from all sinfulness, and being sent out of the world before they had time to do any thing wrong, they were at once admitted into heaven. 'How happy are those,' she exclaimed, 'who secure immortal happiness to such little beings ! *Their little souls would thank those who kill their bodies, if they had it in their power.*'

"Into what a place, and among what society had I been admitted ! How differently did a convent now appear from what I supposed it to be ? The holy women, I had always fancied the nuns to be, the venerable lady Superior, what were they ? And the priests of the Seminary adjoining, some of whom indeed I had reason to think were base and profligate men, what were they all ? I now learnt they were often admitted into the Nunnery, and allowed to indulge in the greatest crimes, which they and others called virtues. After having listened for some time to the Superior alone, a number of the nuns were admitted, and took a free part in the conversation. They concurred in every thing which she had told me, and repeated, without any signs of shame or compunction, things which criminated themselves. I must acknowledge the truth, and declare that all this had an

effect upon my mind. I questioned whether I might not be in the wrong, and felt as if their reasoning might have some just foundation."

Miss Monk proceeds to give an account of the occurrences of the day; and then says, "Nothing important occurred until late in the afternoon, when, as I was sitting in the community-room Father Dufrèsne called me out, saying he wished to speak with me. I feared what was his intention, but dared not disobey. In a private apartment he treated me in a brutal manner; and from two other priests I afterwards received similar usage that evening. Father Dufrèsne afterwards appeared, and I was compelled to remain in company with him until morning."

Miss Monk gives a minute description of the interior of the Convent, the arrangement of the rooms, and their various uses. On the general accuracy of this description she offers to rest her claim to credit and her character for truth; and if the interior of the building, whenever it shall be examined, shall be found materially different from her account of it, she relinquishes all claim to confidence. The proposition is so fair, that no reasonable objection can be made to it. Even if changes should be made in it, she

thinks they cannot so entirely change its appearance but that a thorough examination will verify her description.

Having finished her account of the building, she says, "Nothing was more common than for the Superior to step hastily into the community-rooms while numbers of us were assembled there, and communicate her wishes in words like these : — ' Here are the parents of such a novice : come with me and bear me out in this story.' She would then mention the outlines of a *tissue of falsehoods* she had just invented, that we might be prepared to fabricate circumstances, and throw in whatever else might favour the deception."—

"It was a common remark always at the initiation of a new nun into the Black nun department, that is, to receive the black veil, that the introduction of another novice into the Convent as a veiled nun, always caused the introduction of a veiled nun into heaven as a saint, which was on account of *the singular disappearance* of some of the older nuns always at the entrance of new ones !"

She then says, the Superior would relate to the friends of the novice after whom they were inquiring, but whom they did not see, that she

was fond of her situation, and beloved by her associates; and her story, be it what it might, was always confirmed by the other nuns. "Often," she says, "have I seen her throw open a door, and say, in a hurried manner, 'Who can tell the best story?'"

"One point, on which we received frequent and particular instructions was, *the nature of falsehoods*. On this subject I have heard many a speech, I had almost said sermon; and I was led to believe that it was one of great importance, one on which it was a duty to be well informed, as well as to act. 'What!' exclaimed a priest one day—'what! a nun of your age, and not know the difference between a wicked and a religious lie!'"

After reciting a brief dissertation upon the subject of lying, in which an important distinction was drawn between different kinds of falsehoods, Miss Monk says, "The friends of novices frequently applied at the Convent to see them, or at least to inquire after their welfare. It was common for them to be politely refused an interview, on some account or other, generally a mere pretext; and the Superior usually sought to make as favourable an impression as possible on the visitors. Sometimes she would

make up a story on the spot, and tell the strangers ; requiring some of us to confirm it in the most convincing way we could."

" Sometimes, upon inquiring on such occasions which of the nuns could tell a good story, and when some of the nuns offered their services, the Superior would say, ' Go, and do the best you can ; and all the rest of you must swear to it.' The latter part of the order was always attended to."

Speaking of the sanctity of the Priests : " If," says Miss Monk, " we thought an act *ever so criminal*, the Superior would tell us that *the priests acted under the direct sanction of God*, and *could not sin*. Of course, then, it could not be wrong to comply with any of their requests, because they could not demand any thing but what was right. On the contrary, to refuse to *do any thing*, *they asked* would necessarily be *sinful*."

To show the complete ascendancy of the priests over the nuns, Miss Monk says, " While at confession, I was urged to hide nothing from the Priest, and have been told by them that they already knew what was in my heart, but could not tell because it was necessary for me to confess it."

She found that she had several namesakes among the Nuns, there being two others of the same name ; there were also five St. Marys and three St. Monros, and two novices of that name.

Miss Monk gives the following description of the subterranean parts of the Convent.

“ Three or four days after my reception, the Superior sent me into the cellar for coal ; and after she had given me directions, I proceeded down a staircase with a lamp in my hand. I soon found myself upon the bare earth, in a spacious place, so dark that I could not at once distinguish its form, or size, but I observed that it had very solid stone walls, and was arched overhead at no great elevation. Following my directions, I proceeded onwards from the foot of the stairs, where appeared to be one end of the cellar. After walking about fifteen paces, I passed three small doors on the right, fastened with large iron bolts on the outside, pushed into posts of stone work, and each having a small opening above, covered with a fine grating, and secured by a smaller bolt. On my left were three similar doors resembling these, and placed opposite them.”

After noticing a variety of rooms, closets, &c., she says, “ Having passed these, I found

the cellar again enlarged as before ; and here the earth appeared as if mixed with some whitish substance, which attracted my attention.

“ As I proceeded, I found the whiteness increase, until the surface looked almost like snow ; and in a short time I observed before me a hole dug so deep into the earth that I could perceive no bottom. I stopped to observe it. It was circular, perhaps twelve or fifteen feet across : in the middle of the cellar, and unprotected by any kind of curb, so that one might easily have walked into it in the dark.

“ The white substance which I had observed, was all over the surface around it, and lay in such quantities on all sides that it seemed a great deal of it must have been thrown into the hole. It immediately occurred to me that the white substance was lime, and that this must be the place where the infants were buried after their being murdered as the Superior had informed me. I knew that lime is often used by Roman Catholics in burying places ; and in this way I accounted for its being scattered about the spot in such quantities.”

After finishing this description of the cellar, Miss Monk says, “ Among the first instructions I received from the Superior, were such as pre-

pared me to admit Priests into the Nunnery from the street at irregular hours. It is no secret that Priests enter and go out ; but, if they were to be watched by any person in St. Paul's street all day long, no irregularity might be suspected ; and they might be supposed to visit the Convent for religious ceremonies merely.

“ But if a person were near the gate about midnight, he might sometimes form a different opinion ; for when a stray Priest is shut out of the Seminary, or is otherwise put in need of seeking a lodging, he is always sure of being admitted into the Black Nunnery. Nobody but a Priest can even ring the bell at the sick room door ; much less any but a priest gain admittance. The pull of the bell is entirely concealed, somewhere on the outside of the door I have been told.”

Miss Monk, after describing the signals given by the Priests when they wished to be admitted into the Convent late at night, says, “ The Superior seemed to consider this part of my instructions quite important, and taught me the signals. I had often occasion to use them ; I have been repeatedly called to the door in the night, while watching in the sick room ; and on reaching it, heard the short hissing sound I have mentioned,

then, according to my standing orders, unfastening the door, admitted a Priest, who was at liberty to go when he pleased. I will name M. Bierze, from St. Denis."

Again—"I had been informed by the Superior, on my first admission as a Nun, that there was a subterraneous passage leading from the cellar of our Convent into that of the Congregational Nunnery; but though I had so often visited the cellar, I had never seen it. One day, after I had been received three or four months, I was sent to walk through it on my knees, with another Nun, as a penance. This, and other penances, were sometimes put upon us by the Priests without any reason assigned. The common way, indeed, was to tell us of the sin for which a penance was imposed, but we were left many times to conjecture. Now and then the Priest would inform us at a subsequent confession, when he happened to recollect something about it as I thought, and not because he reflected or cared much upon the subject.

"The Nun who was with me led through the cellar, passing to the right of the secret burying-place, and showed me the door of the subterraneous passage, which was at the extremity towards the Congregational Nunnery. The rea-

sons why I had not noticed it before, I presume were, that it was made to shut close and even with the wall; and all that part of the cellar was whitewashed. The door, which is of wood, and square, opens with a latch into a passage about four feet and a half high. We immediately got upon our knees, commenced saying the prayers required, and began to move slowly along the dark and narrow passage. It may be fifty or sixty feet in length; when we reached the end, we opened a door, and found ourselves in the cellar of the Congregational Nunnery, at some distance from the outer wall; for the covered way is carried in towards the middle of the cellar by two large partitions covered at the top. By the side of the door was placed a list of names of the Black Nuns, with a slide that might be drawn over any of them. We covered our names in this manner, as evidence of having performed the duty assigned us; and then returned downwards on our knees by the way we had come. This penance I repeatedly performed afterwards, and by this way, as I have occasion elsewhere to mention, Nuns from the Congregational Nunnery sometimes entered our Convent for worse purposes."

CHAPTER V.

EXTRACTS from "Awful Disclosures" continued.—Murders committed in the Black Nunnery.—Licentiousness of the Priests and Nuns.

Miss Monk then gives the history of a transaction, which, if true, cannot fail to excite emotions of horror in the breast of every person who reads it. It occurred, she says, about five months after she took the veil.

"One day the Superior sent for me and several other nuns, to receive her commands at a particular room. We found the Bishop and some priests with her; and, speaking in an unusual tone of fierceness and authority, she said, 'Go to the room for the Examination of Conscience, and drag St. Francis up stairs.' Nothing more was necessary than this unusual command, with the tone and manner which accompanied it, to excite in me the most gloomy anticipations. It did not strike me as strange that St. Francis should be in the room to which the Superior directed us. It was an apartment to which we were often sent to prepare for the

communion, and to which we voluntarily went whenever we felt the compunctions which our ignorance of duty and the misinstructions we received, inclined us to seek relief from self-reproach. Indeed, I had seen her there a little before. What terrified me was, first, the Superior's angry manner; second, the expression she used, being a French term, whose peculiar use I had learnt in the Convent, and whose meaning is rather softened when translated into *drag*; third, the place to which we were directed to take the interesting young Nun, and the persons assembled there as I supposed to condemn her. My fears were such, concerning the fate that awaited her, and my horror at the idea that she was in some way to be sacrificed, that I would have given any thing to be allowed to stay where I was. But I feared the consequences of disobeying the Superior, and proceeded with the rest towards the room for the examination of conscience.

"The room to which we were to proceed from that, was in the second story, and the place of many a scene of a shameful nature. It is sufficient for me to say, after what I have said in other parts of this book, that things had there occurred which made me regard the place with

the greatest disgust. St. Francis had appeared melancholy for some time. I well knew that she had cause, for she had been repeatedly subject to trials which I need not name—our common lot. When we reached the door where we had been bidden to seek her, I entered the door, my companions standing behind me, as the place was so small as hardly to hold five persons at a time. The young Nun was standing alone near the middle of the room ; she was probably about twenty, with light hair, blue eyes, and a very fair complexion. I spoke to her in a compassionate voice, but at the same time with such a decided manner that she comprehended my full meaning. ‘ Saint Francis, we are sent for you.’

“ Several others spoke kindly to her, but two addressed her very harshly. The poor creature turned round with a look of meekness, and without expressing any unwillingness or fear, without even speaking a word, resigned herself to our hands. The tears came into my eyes. I had not a moment’s doubt that she considered her fate as sealed, and was already beyond the fear of death. She was conducted, or rather hurried to the staircase, which was near by, and then seized by her limbs and clothes, and in fact almost dragged up stairs in the sense the Super-

rrior had intended. I laid my own hands upon her—I took hold of her too—more gently indeed than some of the rest; yet I encouraged and assisted them in carrying her. I could not avoid it. My refusal could not have saved her, nor prevented her being carried up; it would only have exposed me to some severe punishment, as I believed some of my companions would have seized the first opportunity to complain of me.

“All the way up the staircase Saint Francis spoke not a word nor made the slightest resistance. When we entered with her the room to which she was ordered, my heart sunk within me. The Bishop, the Lady Superior, and five priests, viz: Bonin, Richards, Savage, and two others, I now ascertained, were assembled for her trial on some charge of great importance.

“When we had brought our prisoner before them, Father Richards began to question her, and she made ready but calm replies. I cannot pretend to give a connected account of what ensued; my feelings were wrought up to such a pitch that I knew not what I did or what to do. I was under a terrible apprehension that if I betrayed the feelings which almost overcame me, I should fall under the displeasure of the

cold-blooded persecutors of my poor innocent sister ; and this fear on the one hand, with the distress I felt for her on the other, rendered me almost frantic. As soon as I entered the room, I had stepped into a corner on the left of the entrance, where I might partially support myself by leaning against the wall between the door and window. This support was all that prevented me from falling to the floor ; for the confusion of my thoughts was so great, that only a few of the words I heard spoken on either side made a lasting impression upon me. I felt as if struck with some insupportible blow ; and death would not have been more frightful to me. I am inclined to the belief that Father Richards wished to shield the poor prisoner from the severity of her fate, by drawing from her expressions that might bear a favourable construction. He asked her among other things if she was not sorry for what she had been overheard to say, (for she had been betrayed by one of the Nuns,) and if she would not prefer confinement in the cells to the punishment which was threatened her. But the Bishop soon interrupted him, and it was easy to perceive that he considered her fate as sealed, and was determined she should not escape. In reply to some of the questions

put to her, she was silent ; to others I heard her voice reply that she did not repent of words she had uttered, though they had been reported by some of the Nuns who had heard them ; that she still wished to escape from the Convent ; and that she had firmly resolved to resist every attempt to compel her to the commission of crimes which she detested. She added, that she would rather die than cause the murder of harmless babes.

“ That is enough, finish her ! ” said the Bishop. Two nuns instantly fell upon the young woman, and, in obedience to directions given by the Superior, prepared to execute her sentence.

“ She still maintained all the calmness and submission of a lamb. Some of those who took part in this transaction, I believe were as unwilling as myself ; but of others I can safely say that I believe they delighted in it. Their conduct certainly exhibited a most blood-thirsty spirit. But, above all others present, and above all human fiends I ever saw, I think St. Hypolite was the most diabolical. She engaged in the horrid task with all alacrity, and assumed from choice the most revolting parts to be performed. She seized a gag, forced it into the mouth of the poor Nun, and when it was fixed

between her extended jaws, so as to keep them open at their greatest possible distance, took hold of the straps fastened at each end of the stick, crossed them behind the helpless head of the victim, and drew them tight through the loop prepared as a fastening.

“ The bed which had always stood in one part of the room, still remained there, though the screen, which had usually been placed before it, and was made of thick muslin, with only a crevice through which a person behind might look out, had been folded up on its hinges in the form of a W, and placed in a corner. On the bed the prisoner was laid with her face upward, and then bound with cords so that she could not move. In an instant another bed was thrown upon her. One of the Priests, named Bonin, sprung like a fury first upon it, and stamped upon it with all his force. He was speedily followed by the Nuns, until there were as many upon the bed as could find room ; and all did what they could, not only to smother but to bruise her. Some stood up and jumped upon the poor girl with their feet, some with their knees, and others in different ways seemed to seek how they might best beat the breath out of her body, and mangle it, without coming in direct contact with it or seeing

the effects of their violence. During this time my feelings were almost too strong to be endured. I felt stupified, and scarcely was conscious of what I did. Still, fear for myself remained in a sufficient degree to induce me to some exertion, and I attempted to talk to those who stood near, partly that I might have an excuse for turning away from the dreadful scene.

"After the lapse of fifteen or twenty minutes, and when it was presumed that the sufferer had been smothered and crushed to death, Father Bonin and the Nuns ceased to trample upon her, and stepped from the bed, all was motionless and silent beneath it.

"They then began to laugh at such inhuman thoughts as occurred to some of them, rallying each other in the most unfeeling manner, and ridiculing me for the feelings which I in vain endeavoured to conceal. They alluded to the resignation of our murdered companion; and one of them tauntingly said she would have made a good Catholic martyr. After spending some moments in such conversation, one of them asked if the corpse had better be removed. The Superior said it had better remain a little while. After waiting a short time longer, the feather bed was taken off, the cords unloosed,

and the body taken by the Nuns and dragged down stairs. I was informed that it was taken into the cellar, and thrown unceremoniously into the hole which I have already described, covered with a great quantity of lime, and afterwards sprinkled with a liquid, of the properties of which I am ignorant. This liquid I have seen poured into the hole from large bottles, after the necks were broken off; and have heard that it is used in France to prevent the effluvia arising from cemeteries.

“Not long after the murder just related, a young woman came to the Nunnery, and asked for permission to see Saint Francis. It was my former friend, with whom I had been an assistant teacher, Miss Louise Bosquet of St. Denis. From this I supposed that the murdered Nun might have come from that town or its vicinity. The only answer returned to the inquiry was, that Saint Francis was dead.

“Some time afterward, some of Saint Francis’s friends called to inquire after her, and they were told she had died a glorious death; and further told that she had made some heavenly expressions, which were repeated in order to satisfy her friends.”

Miss Monk describes the pictures of the

Room of the Three States—Heaven, Purgatory, & Hell. “I was often shown,” she says, “the place *where nuns go who break their vows* as a warning. It is *the hottest place in hell*, and worse, in every point of view, even than that to which all Protestants are assigned.

“The first time I went to confession after taking the veil, I found abundant evidence that the Priests did not treat even that ceremony, which is called a solemn sacrament, with respect enough to lay aside the detestable and shameless character they so often showed on other occasions. The Confessor sometimes sat in the room *for the examination of conscience*, and sometimes in the Superior’s room, and always alone, except the Nun who was confessing.

“I shall not tell what was transacted at such times under the pretence of confessing and receiving absolution from sin, *far more guilt was often incurred than pardoned*; and *crimes of a deep dye were committed*, while trifling irregularities in childish ceremonies were treated as serious offences. I cannot persuade myself to speak plainly on such a subject, as I must offend the virtuous ear. I can only say, that *suspicion cannot do any injustice to the Priests, because their sins cannot be exaggerated.*

"One of the most disgusting penances we ever had to submit to, was that of drinking the water in which the Superior had washed her feet."

Miss Monk says—"I was passing one day through a part of the cellar where I had not often occasion to go, when the toe of my shoe hit something. I tripped and fell down. I rose again, and holding my lamp to see what had caused my fall, I found an iron ring, fastened to a small square trap-door. This I had the curiosity to raise, and saw four or five steps leading down, but there was not light enough to see more, and I feared to be noticed by somebody and reported to the Superior; so, closing the door again, I left the spot. At first I could not imagine the use for such a passage; but it afterwards occurred to me that this might open to the subterranean passage to the Seminary, for I never before could account for the appearance of many of the Priests, who often appeared and disappeared among us, particularly at night, when I knew the gates were closed. They could, as I now saw, come up to the door of the Superior's room at any hour, then up the stairs to our sleeping-room, or where they chose, *and often they were in our beds before us.*

"I afterwards ascertained that my conjectures were correct, and that a secret communication was kept up, in this manner, between the two institutions, at the end towards Notre Dame-street, at considerable depth under ground. I often, afterward, met Priests in the cellar, when sent there for coal and other articles, as they had to pass up and down the common cellar-stairs on their way."

Miss Monk gives an account of the reception of several young females as novices into the Convent, and of the brutal treatment they severally experienced from the Priests. She also gives the following of what occurred on a certain occasion :—

"I was often required to sleep on a sofa in the room of the present Superior, as I may have already mentioned.

"One night, not long after I was first introduced there for that purpose, and within the first twelve months of my wearing the veil, having retired, as usual, at about half-past nine, not long after we had got into bed, the alarm bell from without, which hangs over the Superior's bed, was rung. She told me to see who was there ; and going down, I heard the signal given, which I have before mentioned, a pe-

cular kind of hissing sound made through the teeth. I answered with a low Hum—hum ; then opened the door. It was Bishop Lartique, the present Bishop of Montreal. He said to me, ‘ Are you a Novice, or a Received ? ’ meaning a Received nun. I answered, ‘ A Received.’

“ He then requested me to conduct him to the Superior’s room, which I did. He went to the bed, drew the curtains behind him, and I lay down again upon the sofa until morning, when the Superior called me at an early hour, about daylight, and directed me to show him to the door, to which I conducted him, and he took his departure.”

CHAPTER VI.

EXTRACTS from “ Awful Disclosures ” Continued.—Prolonged imprisonment of nuns in dungeons.—Further evidence of dissoluteness and murder.—Reflections.—The Monastic system, a direct violation of the law of God, by which the family state was instituted.—The result of monasteries, such as might have been expected.

IMMEDIATELY subsequent to this, we have the following account :

“ I continued to visit the cellar frequently, to

carry up coal for the fires, without any thing more than a general impression that there were two Nuns somewhere imprisoned in it. One day, while on my usual errand, I saw a Nun standing on the cellar, in front of one of the cell doors I had before observed ; she was apparently engaged with something within. This attracted my attention. The door appeared to close in a small recess, and was fastened with a stout iron bolt on the outside, the end of which was secured by being let into a hole in the stone-work which formed the posts. The door, which was of wood, was sunk a few inches beyond the stone-work, which rose and formed an arch overhead. Above the bolt was a small window supplied with a fine grating, which swung open ; a small bolt having been removed from it on the outside. The nun I had observed seemed to be whispering with some person within through the little window : but I hastened to get my coal and left the cellar, presuming that was the prison. When I visited the place again, being alone, I ventured to the spot, determined to learn the truth, presuming that the imprisoned Nuns, of whom the Superior had told me on my admission, were confined there. I spoke at the window where I had seen the Nun

standing, and heard a voice reply in a whisper. The aperture was so small, and the place so dark, that I could see nobody ; but I learnt that a poor wretch was confined there a prisoner. I feared that I might be discovered, and after a few words, which I thought could do no harm, I withdrew.

“ My curiosity was now alive to learn every thing I could about so mysterious a subject. I made a few inquiries of Saint Xavier, who only informed me that they were punished for refusing to obey the Superior, Bishop, and Priests. I afterwards found that the other Nuns were acquainted with the fact I had just discovered. All I could learn, however, was, that the prisoner in the cell whom I had spoken with, and another in the cell just beyond, *had been confined there several years without having been taken out ;* but their names, connexions, offences, and every thing else relating to them, I could never learn, and am still as ignorant of as ever. Some conjectured that they had refused to comply with some of the rules of the Convent or requisitions of the Superior ; others, that they were heiresses, whose property was desired for the Convent, and who would not consent to sign deeds of it. Some of the Nuns informed me that the sever-

est of their sufferings arose from fear of supernatural beings.

" Their cells were occasionally cleaned, and then the doors were opened. I never looked into them, but was informed that the ground was their only floor. I presumed that they were furnished with straw to lie upon, as I always saw a quantity of old straw scattered about that part of the cellar after the cells had been cleaned. I once inquired of one of them whether they could converse together, and she replied that they could, through a small opening between their cells, which I could not see.

" Some of the Priests from the Seminary were in the Nunnery every day and night, and often several at a time. I have seen nearly all of them at different times, though there are about one hundred and fifty in the district of Montreal. There was a difference in their conduct, though I believe every one of them was guilty of licentiousness ; while not one did I ever see who maintained a character any way becoming the profession of a priest. Some were gross and degraded in a degree which few of my readers can ever have imagined ; and I should be unwilling to offend the eye and corrupt the heart of any one by an account of their words and ac-

tions. Few imaginations can conceive deeds so abominable as they practised, and often required of the poor women, under the fear of severe punishments, and even of death. I do not hesitate to say, with the strongest confidence, that though some of the nuns became lost to every sentiment of virtue and honour, especially one from the Congregational Nunnery whom I have before mentioned—Saint Patrick—the greater part of them loathed the practices to which they were compelled to submit by the Superior and Priests, who kept them under so dreadful a bondage.

“It will be recollected that I was informed, immediately after receiving the veil, that infants were occasionally murdered in the Convent. I was one day in the Nuns’ private sick room, when I had an opportunity, unsought for, of witnessing deeds of such a nature. It was, perhaps, a month after the death of Saint Francis. Two little twin babes, the children of Saint Catharine, were brought to a Priest who was in the room for baptism. I was present while the ceremony was performed, with the Superior and several of the old Nuns, whose names I never knew, they being called Ma tante, Aunt.

“The Priests took turns in attending to con-

fession and catechism in the Convent, usually three months at a time, though sometimes longer periods. The Priest then on duty was Father Larkin. He is a good-looking European, and has a brother who is a professor in the college. He first put oil on the heads of the infants, as is the custom before baptism. When he had baptized the children, they were taken one after another, by one of the old Nuns in the presence of us all. She pressed her hand upon the mouth and nose of the first, so tight that it could not breathe, and in a few minutes, when the hand was removed, it was dead. She then took the other, and treated it in the same way. No sound was heard, and both the children were corpses. The greatest indifference was shown by all present during this operation; for all, as I well knew, were long accustomed to such scenes. The little bodies were then taken into the cellar, thrown into the pit I have mentioned, and covered with a quantity of lime.

“I afterwards saw another new-born infant treated in the same manner in the same place; but the actors in this scene, I choose not to name, nor the circumstances, as every thing connected with it is of a peculiarly trying and painful nature to my own feelings.”

These were the only instances of infanticide which Miss Monk saw, but she was told that all the children born in the place were baptized and killed. "That others were killed," she says, "in the same manner, during my stay in the Nunnery, I am well assured." What numbers she does not know, but from the best knowledge she has, she thinks not less than eighteen or twenty.

During her residence in the Convent, the old Superior disappeared without any cause being assigned. She parted with them over night, and the next morning the Bishop introduced a new one to them.

Miss Monk states that several Nuns disappeared while she was in the Convent, she is confident as many at least as five. In what manner she does not know. She saw the gags repeatedly in use—half a dozen Nuns lying gagged and bound at once. She was several times subjected to the same punishment; and in one instance was taken by some of the Nuns, bound and gagged, carried into the cellar and laid upon the floor. Her hands were drawn behind her back, a leathern band was passed round her thumbs, then round her hands, and then her waist, and fastened. It was drawn so

tight that it cut through the flesh of her thumbs, making wounds, the scars of which still remain. A gag was then forced into her mouth, and she was carried into the cellar, thrown into one of the rooms upon the bare ground, left there, the door being bolted upon the outside, in total darkness, as she thinks for several hours. The distress which she suffered from the bandage about her hands, and from the gag, which forced her jaws to their greatest possible extension apart, was extreme. She was finally released upon her agreeing to ask pardon of all the Nuns for the scandal she had caused them by her behaviour. The marks of various penances to which she was subjected are still visible.

Among the penances which are inflicted, she mentions kissing the floor, kneeling and kissing the feet of other Nuns, kneeling on hard peas, walking upon them in their shoes, walking upon their knees through the subterranean passage leading to the Congregational Nunnery, eating their meals with ropes round their necks, obliging them to eat such things as they most disliked, drinking the water in which the *Lady Superior* had washed her feet, branding themselves with hot irons, and whipping their naked flesh with small rods until they drew blood. Sometimes they were obliged to stand for a length of time

with their arms extended, in imitation of the Saviour on the Cross ; sometimes were forced to sleep on the floor in the winter, with nothing over them but a single sheet ; sometimes to chew a piece of window glass to a fine powder in presence of the Superior ; and sometimes to wear leathern belts stuck full of sharp metallic points round their waists and the upper part of their arms, bound on so tight that they drew blood ; gagging in a cruel manner ; and hanging the Nuns by their feet with their head downwards. One of the worst punishments was that of a cap made of leather, fitted close to the head, and fastened with a kind of buckle under the chin. It was the common practice to tie the Nun's hands behind and gag her before the cap was put on, to prevent noise and resistance. It caused the most severe distress.

The country as far down the St. Lawrence as Three Rivers, is furnished with Priests from the Montreal Seminary, amounting to one hundred and fifty. They are transferred from one station to another, and when at Montreal have a right to enter the Black Nunnery, where they have absolute control over the Nuns. Miss Monk has seen Priests from more than a hundred country places, as she presumes, admit-

ted to the Nunnery for shameful and criminal purposes.

"I was once much shocked on entering the room for the examination of conscience, at seeing a Nun hanging by a cord from a ring in the ceiling with her head downward. Her clothes had been tied round her with a leathern strap to keep them in their place, and then she had been fastened in that situation, with her head some distance from the floor. Her face had a very unpleasant appearance, being dark colored and swollen by the rushing of the blood; her hands were tied, and her mouth stopped with a large gag. This Nun proved to be Jane Ray, who for some fault had been condemned to this punishment.

"This was not a solitary case; I heard of numbers who were 'hung,' as it was called, at different times; and I saw Saint Hypolite and Saint Luke undergoing it."

In the Superior's parlour Miss Monk saw a book which contained a record of the entrance of Nuns and Novices into the Convent, and of the births that had taken place in it. She does not know the number, but from the entries which she examined supposes it must have been large. There was no entry that she saw of any death.

Miss Monk's "Disclosures" relate to transactions and events, which are alleged to have occurred, not in the United States, but in a neighbouring British Province. They have been adverted to for the purpose of showing the natural, and, it may be said, the necessary tendency of monastic institutions. That such is their tendency, will not be questioned by any disinterested person, who is in any good degree acquainted with the human character. A system of religion which runs counter to the principles and feelings implanted in the human mind by the Creator, and intended to have a most important moral influence on the social and domestic happiness of mankind, must, in the nature of things, be unsound and pernicious. Such is the popish system. "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; *male and female created he them.*" This is the language of Scripture; and it is immediately added:—

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, *Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth.*"

This sacred relationship between the sexes was intended to promote the highest temporal happiness of the human race, and to exert a

most important influence in securing their felicity in a future world. The Popish system attempts to divide, to put asunder, those whom God had joined together—to leave the human race a prey to their natural passions, and expose them to the strongest temptations to licentiousness. The result has been such as might have been anticipated. The evidence which this work will contain, will establish the truth of this remark; and Miss Monk's testimony goes to prove that licentiousness produces its natural fruit, the highest degree of criminality.

In order to show that the Convent at Montreal is not a solitary instance of the corrupt and criminal nature and tendency of monastic institutions, another case will be adverted to, which will serve to remove any ideas of extravagance and improbability from Miss Monk's "Disclosures," arising from the gross turpitude of their character.

CHAPTER VII.

ROMAN Catholic testimony of the debasing and abominable tendency of the Monastic system. Extracts from Cardinal Ricci's "Secrets of Female Convents Disclosed." The dissolute lives of monks, nuns, and priests, in Tuscany.

IN the year 1829, a book was published in England with the following title:—" *Female Convents. Secrets of Nunneries Disclosed. Compiled from the Autograph Manuscripts of Scipio De Ricci, Roman Catholic Bishop of Pistoia and Prato. By Mr. De Potter. Edited by Thomas Roscoe.*" Mr. Roscoe was the son of the late William Roscoe, the well-known and learned biographer of Lorenzo de Medicis and Leo X., and a gentleman highly respected for his talents and character. The materials of which this work is composed were not derived from any *Heretical* source, but from the manuscripts of a Catholic bishop, within the dominions of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. That prelate lived in the latter part of the last century, under the reign of the Archduke Leopold, who was afterwards raised to the throne of

the Austrian empire. While at the head of his Tuscan dominions he laboured with a zeal and energy which were in a high degree honourable to his principles and character, in seconding the exertions of the Bishop of Pistoia in his endeavours to bring about an ecclesiastical reformation in his diocese. In the course of his labours, facts of the most extraordinary nature were brought to light, which showed the deep depravity, the gross and shocking corruption, which existed in the monastic institutions. The following extracts from this work may have a tendency to corroborate the accounts contained in the publications of Miss Reed and Miss Monk. The first is a letter addressed to the Grand Duke Leopold, by a Nun of Castiglion Fiorentino ; and which “led the way to those investigations of the scandalous abuses by which Ricci subsequently rendered his ecclesiastical career so remarkable.” It is in the following terms :—

“ Our Convent is under the direction of the Minor Observatines, and is consequently in a state of the greatest irregularity and disorder. The Superior and the old Nuns confine themselves entirely to their cells, and occupy themselves in various employments without paying

the least attention to what goes on between the other Nuns and those persons who have the privilege of admission within the walls of the cloister. I had for a long time observed that the factor of the Convent carried on intrigues with the young Nuns, and that his intercourse with one of them was *indecent in the extreme*. In order, however, not to form too hasty and unjust a judgment of them, I concealed myself in a neighboring apartment, and discovered that they were in the habit of committing the most indecent actions. Since that time, whenever the factor makes his appearance, I always remain, under pretence of age (being nearly fifty), below, with my work, and walk backwards and forwards in order not to allow him an opportunity of being alone with the Nuns. The Abbess was the means of engaging that factor, which she did almost by force, against the opinion of others who thought him too young. She is very angry with me, and will certainly not fail to punish me in some way or other.

“I cannot complain to the Provincial, for the monks will not listen to any complaints of the kind. Their answer uniformly is, when any are made, that they proceed from malignity and calumny ; while those who speak to them

concerning them, are declared to be foolish, scandalous, and turbulent persons, who spy the actions of others, who do not behave like true Nuns, and who ought to be imprisoned, &c. The Nuns are therefore obliged either to allow such enormous irregularities to go unchecked, or to run *the risk of imprisonment for life* under some false pretext. No one cares whether a Nun remains alone with the factor. If any amusement is going forward, the factor is invited to the Convent, where *he shuts himself up in a room with one of them, and sometimes with two* if they are intimate with him.

“The Monks, to insure themselves against dislike on the part of the Nuns, overlook the whole ; for our Confessor, who is always selected from that body, is supported by the Nuns, who must supply him with every thing which he desires during the time that he is obliged to occupy a dwelling in the neighborhood of the Convent. Finding themselves well provided with every thing which they want, these Monks do not give themselves the least trouble about the abuses which prevail in the Convents. There are even some of them who make love to the Nuns, and render them much more impudent than the lay members who are guilty

of the same practices. Some years ago a Monk was found in the Convent during the night, and expelled from it by the bailiffs. The affair in consequence became universally known.

"The Nun is of opinion that the case of the factor was much more blameable, inasmuch as his duties provided him with constant opportunities of sinning. She therefore supplicates the Grand Duke to order a nobleman, on whom the factor was dependent, to recall him to Florence, without allowing it to appear that he was at all acquainted with the irregularity of his conduct. 'For,' says she, '*if what I now write to you were known, it would be sufficient to cause me to be poisoned by my companions, who are totally given up to vice.*'

"The above letter is dated May, 1770, from the Convent of Jerome, at Castiglion Fiorentino, and signed Lucrece Leonide Beroardi.' "

"The scandalous wickedness of some members of the priesthood, under the cloak of religion, and by a perversion of its authority, was known to the Grand Duke in 1766. Senator Rucellai then addressed to his prince a memoir relating to the intrigues of the *Tuscan Inquisitors*, of the *higher orders of the clergy* of the

Grand Duchy, of the Nunciature at Florence and of the court of Rome; all of whom laboured in concert to elude the wise laws of the late emperor.

“A lady of the name of Maria Catherine Barni, of Santa Croce, declared on her death-bed that she had been seduced *through the medium of confession*; and that she had, during twelve years, maintained a criminal intercourse with a priest, Pierre Pacchiana, Prior of St. Martin at Castel-Franco-di-Sotto, who was her confessor. She denounced him to the Bishop of Miniato, May, 1764.

“He had assured her, by means of the supernatural light which he had received from Jesus and the Holy Virgin, he was perfectly certain that *neither of them were guilty of sin in carrying on that correspondence.*

“Maria Magdalene Sicini, of Santa Croce, whom she had pointed out as being in the same predicament with herself, deposed:—that generally about an hour after the confession was over, *Pacchiana had a criminal intercourse with her in the vestry*; that she knew well enough that she was committing sin, and that *she made confession of it afterwards to Pacchiana himself*, who excused her because *it had been done with good intentions.* This lady named another, Vic-

toire Benedetti, who at her examination made a declaration to the same effect ; only adding, that *she had not the least scruple in regard to her connexion with Pacchiana.*

“ The trial of that priest for *heretical propositions* belonged properly to the Inquisition, but after much intrigue and manœuvring the affair got into the hands of the Archbishop ; next into those of the Nuncio ; then into those of the court of Rome ; and Pacchiana, who had been dismissed, was *finally returned to his parish.*

“ The decree of Gratian was the first which claimed for the ecclesiastical body the power of judging persons who were accused of crimes ; but it was not till 1591 that Gregory XIV. originated the abuse and scandal of asylums, by pointing out eight crimes to which that privilege could not be accorded, and by ordaining that the ecclesiastical tribunals should thenceforth finally decide whether those who had taken refuge were or were not within the excepted cases.”

After mentioning that this privilege had been much diminished in other Catholic countries, it is said—

“ Tuscany, therefore, was the only country in which the most atrocious crimes, as well as

the most trifling offences, remained not only unpunished, but were encouraged and protected by the privilege of the churches. Assassins, fratricides, poisoners, incendiaries, deserters, robbers, sons of the nobility who wished to withdraw themselves from paternal authority ; monks who had subjected themselves to punishment from their superiors, or soldiers from their officers ; those who had contracted debts, &c., &c., all took refuge in the same asylum, were all equally well received, and lived in a state of the greatest disorder.

“ They frequently disturbed the performance of divine service, and often maltreated the clergy ; committed crime after crime, insulted, and even wounded, those who attended the church where they had been received without shame, and were supported and openly defended. There they kept a school for the instruction of the young in robbery and swindling, sold contraband goods and stolen wares. *They had prostitutes among them, slept pell-mell under the porticoes, and not unfrequently had children born to them during the time that they remained in the asylum.*

“ The Convents were, however, the greatest receptacles of criminals, whom the monks treated remarkably well, on account of the benefit which

they derived from their domestic labours, and because they could use them as instruments for the commission of those frauds which they were desirous of executing, and as apologies for those of which *they were themselves guilty*, and which they failed not to place to the credit of their guests. They employed them particularly in contraband trade for the use of the Convent.

“ A short time previous to the reform of the asylum, the monks of the Convent of Spirito, at Florence, carried their impudence so far as to allot a chamber among the novices to a robber who had attempted to kill his own brother.

“ For a century and a half previous to this, the total corruption of the Dominican order had been a matter of scandal throughout Tuscany. The spiritual direction which those monks had of the female Convents had degenerated into the basest profligacy. A petition, dated 1642, still exists, in which the Gonfalonier of that period, and other representatives of the people of Pistoia, address the reigning Duke, praying for a reformation in the convents of the Dominicans of Lucia and Catherine. Ferdinand, however, did nothing, and the honour was reserved for Leopold.

“ Two Nuns of the Convent of Catherine of

Pistoia, who had exposed the execrable principles and doctrines of the Dominican monks, their directors, gave rise to his wise reforms. They proved how much the profit which the monks, and, above all, the Provincial and the Confessor, drew from their Convent, as well as from others, hurt the temporal interests of those religious houses, and were gradually ruining them. They gave equally strong proofs of the spiritual ruin produced by the familiarity of the Monks with the Nuns, and the easy communication which they had with them. They ate and drank with their favourite sisters, remained alone with them in their cells when they chose, and whenever they could find a pretext slept during the night in the cloister. Long habit had, in fact, so accustomed them to the greatest license, that scarcely any respect to public decency remained. We here insert the declaration of the Nuns of Catherine of Pistoia, which was presented to the Grand Duke Leopold in the year 1775.

“Instead of allowing us to remain in our simplicity and protecting our innocence, they teach us, both by word and action, all kinds of indecencies. They frequently come to the vestry, of which they have almost all the keys ;

and as there is a grate there, they commit a thousand indecorous acts.

“ If they get an opportunity of coming into the Convent under any feigned pretext, they go and stay alone in the chambers of those who are devoted to them. They are all of the same stamp ; and they are not ashamed to take advantage of the circumstances of the visitation for those purposes. They utter the worst expressions, saying that *we should look upon it as a great happiness that we have the power of satisfying our appetites without being exposed to the annoyance of children*. They say that when this life is ended, all is ended ; and they add, that even Paul, who wrought with his own hands, should teach us ; and that we should not hesitate to take our pleasures.

“ They allow every kind of indecency to go on in the parlour. Though often warned by us, they do not break off the dangerous intimacies that are formed ; and hence it has often occurred that men who have contrived to get the keys have come into the Convent during the night, which they have spent in the most dissipated manner. They also suffer the Nuns to neglect the sacraments : they never think of introducing the practice of mental prayer, and

they preach nothing but the pleasures of this life. The sisters who live according to their maxims, are extolled by them, and indulged in every extravagance ; and the others must either go with the stream, heedless of conscience, or live in a state of perpetual warfare, as is actually the case with us now.

" This is the real truth. We the undersigned attest it, without passion, and on our conscience.

" ANNA TERESI MERLINI, Madre de Consiglio.

" ROSA PERACCINI, Madre de Consiglio.

" FLAVIA PERACCINI, Madre de Consiglio.

" GAETANA POGGIALA.

" CANDIDA GISCONDA BOTTI.

" MARIA CLOTILDA BAMBI."

" The intercourse of the Monks and Nuns, according to Ricci, had arrived to such a pitch of infamous licentiousness, that topics of the most disgusting nature formed the usual subject of their conversation ; while the greater part of their sisters deprived themselves of their money and every thing else to satisfy the rapacity of their lovers, performed for them the most servile offices, and even sometimes *went by the name of their wives*. A person who had been in the service of the Dominicans, told the Bishop many other things of a still worse kind,

that his principal employment had been that of a confidential messenger in their love-intrigues. Leopold, already well informed of this condition of the Convents, to obtain still farther information had the *fabriciers* of the establishment examined, and found every thing he had before heard confirmed. He next had all the Nuns themselves examined by the lieutenant of Police, and seeing the necessity of some prompt and vigorous measure, appointed Bishop Alamanni to take without delay the spiritual superintendence of all the Dominican Convents of Pistoia, and prohibited the Dominican Monks, on pain of imprisonment, from approaching them. While Ricci was Vicar of the Archbishop of Florence, it was reported to him that in a convent of that diocese, where the nuns all slept in a common dormitory, the two tall beds were for the Father Confessor and his lay brother, that they might have them in case of being called to assist any sick sister during the night."

After a variety of other statements, the following remarks are made—

"The reader is now well acquainted with the Dominican Nuns, and the Monks, their seducers. It would be useless to make any ob-

servation on the interest which *one of the princes of the church* testified so openly for them, as well as the high protection which he promised them in resuming, as soon as possible, their claustral amours, and returning to their libertine habits, against the will of their Prince and their Bishop; of those who were charged, as they say, *by divine right*, to oblige them to live in a way the *most useless and innocuous to society*.

“Still greater disorders than those which had been supposed to exist at Pistoia were soon discovered at Prato. Ricci had his attention directed towards the latter by the disgraceful incontinency of two of the Nuns. All the evil which existed was attributable to the Dominican Monks. ‘For many years,’ says the Bishop, ‘those women lived plunged in the most infamous debauchery. The name of the one was Catherine Irene Buonamici, sprung from a noble family in Prato, aged fifty years; the other, Clodesin de Spighi, of equally noble descent, aged thirty-eight years. Every means had been employed by the Dominicans to prevent any of the circumstances from transpiring. When Ricci, however, received the government of the diocese, and Vincent Majorchi was appointed confessor to the Convent of Catherine, the dread-

ful situation of its members became exposed to public notice. At the feast of Pentecost, Majorchi, more scrupulous than his predecessors, refused those two Nuns absolution. In an instant the affair became known abroad. The Vicar of Prato, Lorenzo Palli, was informed of it; and Ricci himself, hearing it reported, sent to obtain the details from the Vicar. The latter answered, that the Nuns believed neither the sacraments of the church nor the eternity of another life; that *they denied certain criminal actions to be sins, and especially those of the flesh.*

“One of the most important circumstances in this singular affair, is the manner in which the *Pope and the General of the Dominicans were implicated in a matter of heresy, profanation, sacrilege, impiety, and licentiousness*—a matter of which *they knew all the details*, but which they seem to have regarded *as calling for concealment rather than punishment*. This circumstance will make every truly religious mind shudder.

“Pius VI. in his insolent brief to Ricci, dated May, asserted that he himself would not have dared to conceive suspicions against *the most holy order of the Dominicans*.

“We have spoken of the singular proposi-

tions contained in this brief of the Pope, and particularly of the misplaced and unseasonable eulogy which he there passes on the order of Dominic. This eulogy is followed by one on the Inquisition, still more absurd than the first. 'These may appear paradoxes,' says the Abbe Mergoni, 'but it is certain that the Pontiff has commended a tribunal that is a dishonour to our holy religion.' Pius VI. wished to withdraw the two Nuns of Catherine from the inexorable public justice of the Bishop to give them to the secret procedures of the Inquisition. There a general confession, in the style of those they had already made so often, would have not only obtained them entire pardon, but also have procured them the means of resuming their old course, as that tribunal is *only severe towards those whose conduct and known sentiments might influence public opinion so as to diminish the authority and the revenues of the clergy.*"

After giving some account of Ricci's reply to the Pope's letter to him, and quoting a passage from it, in which he again charges the enormities alluded to the Dominicans, it is said—

"He then repeats that the Confessor, on tak-

ing possession of his office, used openly to choose *a mistress among the Nuns*; and that, when any of them were sick, there was a fete at the Convent. The Confessor made the Nuns attend him at table, and there he played cards and danced with them, &c. Need we be astonished, said he, if the disorders of so many Nuns, who had been all tempted and many seduced, should eventually have spread through the town, or if their scandalous opinions and actions should have been the subject of conversation in public circles?"

CHAPTER VIII.

REFLECTIONS on the preceding testimony.—Deductions from it.—Professed objects for the establishment of Nunneries, and Roman Catholic Colleges and Seminaries in the United States.—Enquiry into the real motives.—Testimony to prove that the object is not intellectual improvement, but proselyting.

THE events referred to in these extracts did not occur in what are called the dark ages. It is but a little more than half a century since the Bishop of Pistoia, under the reign, and with the sanction and co-operation of the Grand Duke

Leopold, both of them sincere and zealous Catholics, attempted to reform the gross views and profligacy of the Convents within their jurisdiction. In their efforts for the accomplishment of this object, they met with the most strenuous opposition, not only from the licentious and abandoned inmates of the Convents, but in a variety of instances from the Pope himself.

After reading the statements contained in them, and bearing in mind the source from which they proceeded, nothing in Miss Monk's book will be considered as incredible or extravagant; and unless her narrations are shown by the most satisfactory evidence to be false and unfounded, they will gain credit with the unprejudiced part of the community. Such proof has not thus far been publicly adduced. On the contrary, many witnesses, totally unknown before to her, and to those who have lent their aid in bringing her work before the public, voluntarily, and from a mere regard to the truth, have offered their testimony to support various material portions of her publication. Besides, it will be impossible, unless an inspection of the inside of the Nunnery at Montreal shall be thoroughly made, its apartments from top to

bottom fully examined, and the fact that there is or is not, or at any rate that *there has not been*, a subterranean passage between that edifice and the Seminary, to make the public believe that her "Disclosures" are fabrications. Bold assertions, charges of falsehood, appeals to liberality, and every other indirect and evasive attempt to impress the public mind unfavourably towards her work, will not answer the exigencies of the case nor change public opinion. Something more decisive than all this will be found necessary to decide the great question now before the tribunal of the public for decision.

The publication entitled "*Secrets of Female Convents*," describes many instances of lewdness between Monks and Nuns, equal, in point of profligacy and shamelessness, to those contained in Miss Monk's "Disclosures." Several have been cited which will fully justify this remark. The Monk who seduced Maria Catherine Barni, as she declared on her death-bed, did it "*through the medium of confession*;" and having accomplished his object, in order to quiet her conscience, "he assured her that, by means of the supernatural light which he had received from Jesus and the Holy Virgin, he was perfectly certain that neither of

them was guilty of sin in carrying on that correspondence." Another Nun, who had been the victim of his licentiousness, deposed : " that generally *about an hour after the confession was over*, Pacchiana (the Confessor himself) had a *criminal intercourse with her in the vestry*; that she knew well enough that she was committing sin, and that *she made confession of it afterwards to Pacchiana himself*, who excused her because *it had been done with good intentions.*" Who then will be surprised to find a history of such profligacy of morals, such a prostration of all that is decent, as well as all that is virtuous, in the Black Nunnery at Montreal as is related by Miss Monk? Or who, from the merely apparent extravagance of the account, will, after reading the "Secrets of Female Convents" in Tuscany, proved by the testimony, not only of Catholic witnesses who were on the spot, and which was recorded by a Catholic prelate under whose jurisdiction the enormities occurred, but testified to by the parties concerned in them? Certainly, no person can fail, even at this distance of time, being shocked at such dreadful depravity, carried on by persons professedly devoted to a religious life, under the mask of piety, in a place devoted to religious service, and claimed to be

done *by the authority of the Saviour himself*, without being shocked at the impiety and blasphemy as well as at the profligacy of morals which the case manifests. And, as if it were an object to show what lengths in wickedness a professed minister of the Christian religion could go, here was a man appointed under the abominable system of private confession, to hear and absolve the sins of those under his care, taking the confession of the woman he had seduced from the path of virtue, and with whom he had carried on a criminal intercourse for twelve years; and then assuring her that by the light received from the Divine Redeemer of sinners, *he was perfectly sure neither of them was guilty of any sin* in the practice of such lewd and licentious conduct. And in another instance this same Confessor, *an hour after confession*, was in the habit of holding criminal intercourse with a Nun *in the vestry*, then taking her confession of the guilt of the transaction, and *excusing her on the ground "that it had been done with good intentions."*

The surprise which would naturally be experienced by a virtuous mind at reading the passage just referred to, may be in some measure lessened by adverting to the doctrine contained

in the annotations upon the 19th verse of the 7th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, in the Rhemish New Testament—the standard copy in the Romish Church. The verse, as translated in the Protestant Testament, is as follows—*“For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.”* The Popish translation is thus—*“For not the good which I will, that I do; but the evil which I will not, that I do.”* The annotation in the latter is as follows—*“Verse 19. Not the good which I will. So may the just also be forced by the rage of concupiscence or sensual appetite, to do or suffer many things in his inferior part or external members, which his will consenteth not unto. And so long it is so far from sin, that as Augustine saith, he need never say to God, forgive us our sins, for the same, for sin is voluntary and so be not these passions.”* It is not necessary for the present purpose to decide which translation of the foregoing text is the most correct—the Protestant or the Popish; but according to Fulke, in his *“Confutation of the Rhemish Testament,”* the language of St. Augustine, as well as his sentiments, are misapplied and perverted in the above annotation. But it is the annotation itself, and the principle contained in it, as intended to

justify vice and immorality, to which the attention of the reader is directed. And it goes the length, in terms somewhat obscure it is true, but sufficiently plain to be understood, to indicate any degree of licentiousness which the most abandoned profligate may be disposed to practise, by pleading that *his will* doth not consent to that which is done by *his inferior part or external members*—that to make an act sinful, it must be done voluntarily, while *his passions are not voluntary*. No man who habitually visits the brothel, and spends his days and his nights in the most criminal and abandoned practices, could ever ask or wish for a more extensive license for iniquity than this short passage contains; and no person can feel any surprise at learning that a practitioner under it takes the confession and grants absolution to the miserable partner in his guilt, with whom he has just before indulged a grossly criminal intercourse within the walls, and in the vestry, of a nominally sacred edifice, and then alleges a special divine permission for his detestable conduct.

There is nothing extravagant, therefore, in concluding that Miss Monk's "Disclosures" may be true, notwithstanding the enormities which they relate. Popery is the same now

that it was many centuries ago. All that it has lost in later times, has been reluctantly yielded to the intelligence and experience of the world; and is not owing to any voluntary change of doctrine or conduct.

CHAPTER IX.

Is education or proselyting the real object of Nunneries and Roman Catholic Seminaries in the United States?—
 Testimony furnished by Miss Reed on this subject.—
 Secrecy in managing and despotism in governing nunneries.

ONE object which the Catholics professedly have in view in the establishment of their institutions in the United States, is the education of youths of both sexes. It is a little remarkable, that those who have so uniformly inculcated the sentiment that "ignorance is the mother of devotion," should feel such an interest in this great subject as to leave their own countries, where that which they consider the only true faith prevails, and is preserved to a great extent by the practical influence of the maxim above-mentioned, and should visit a people where the indispensable importance of universal education

is acknowledged by all, and very generally practised ; and this for the mere purpose of engaging in literary instruction. Still, there has been among some people something captivating in the idea of having children taught by Catholic preceptors, even at the risk of having their minds corrupted by the doctrines and dogmas of their pernicious and dangerous system. It is difficult to imagine how Protestant parents could ever have been induced to hazard the principles, and even the personal security, of their children in Catholic seminaries. Whatever may be the qualifications of the Catholic clergy in Europe as teachers of youth in letters and science, no person who will take the trouble to examine into the state of things in this country can doubt that here they are not distinguished for learning or talents ; and if credit is due to the books from which such large quotations have been made, it may be added—in temper or morals, for the superintendence of the education of youth—and, most emphatically, of Protestant youth. By the evidence contained in the appendix to the Supplement to Miss Reed's publication, the school at the Charlestown Convent was of a very inferior character as a place of education, without

any reference to other considerations immediately connected with it.

That Appendix contains statements and certificates from a number of individuals, who had been pupils in the Mount Benedict Seminary, from which the following passages are taken:

“The instructors for about fifty or sixty young ladies in the school were, Miss Mary Benedict, who taught Latin, French, and the common English branches; Miss Mary Austin and Mary Magdalene, who taught arithmetic; Miss Mary John, (Miss Harrison,) and Miss Mary Francis, music. The Superior never heard the classes recite, and took no part in the instruction. The only instructor of any kind, except the Nuns, was Mr. Papanti, who taught dancing, in the music-room, adjoining the school-room. After they left, Mr. Maeder taught singing, and Mrs. Barrymore dancing. There were no philosophical apparatus or instruments in the school of any kind. The only apparatus was a small terrestrial and celestial globe. There were no public examinations, and none but the Bishop and Priests ever visited the school.

“The Superior (in her reply to Miss Reed) says, ‘Every one that wished to become ac-

quainted with the whole interior discipline of both pupils and *teachers*, could easily obtain information from any of the young ladies who have been in the institution since the school was opened.' The following is the information which an observing young lady, a pupil at the Convent, from the South, has given us, written by herself, and its truth may be implicitly relied on. She heard and saw all that the "*daughter*" here describes.

"*Mother.* Come, my love, you have not told me how you spend your time at Mount Benedict; you know you must return to-morrow, and I should like to have you give me some account of the way in which you occupy yourself when there.

"*Daughter.* Oh, mother, do not send me back so soon, and I will tell you all we do from the time we open our eyes in the morning, until we shut them again at night. The first two or three days I was there I was often called out of the school-room between breakfast and dinner, and given apples or a piece of pie; and the Superior would sometimes ask me if I was happy. I was allowed to lie in bed half an hour longer than the other young ladies. In a few days I

was told to get up at six, and now I will tell you how we spent the day.

“As soon as the clock struck six, the door opens, and Mary Benedict comes in, repeating the offering:—‘Oh God! I offer thee my heart,’ and so on. While she repeats this we all get out of bed, and commence dressing; we have to dress, make our beds, and be down in the school-room in half an hour. During this time there is not a word spoken; we walk two and two, with one of the Nuns at our head, down stairs. The Protestants go into the school-room, and the Catholics into the Bishop’s room to prayer. We kneel one behind the other, upon the floor, which is not too clean, as my dress afterwards testified. One of the young ladies *reads the Catholic prayers*. When that is finished, we study an hour. During this time the Nuns always say their prayers. At half after seven a bell rings for breakfast, to which we go in the same manner as we came to the school-room. We seat ourselves, after the blessing is asked, to a cup of weak tea, which I think was without sugar; at least I did not perceive any: one inch of butter upon a small plate, and a piece of bread. After partaking of this breakfast, we returned to the

school-room, where we had a recess. In this hour we are not allowed to walk up and down the school-room, or to stay in any other part, except where we always sat ; but we might talk as loud as we chose, and do fancy work, sew, or cut paper. When this hour is expired, we make an offering standing, (a prayer,) and in silence commence our several studies. Some go to take their music lessons, others to practise, and Mary Austin calls her class (the senior class) to recite. At the close of a recitation one of the class said to me, I admire to ask Mary Austin about my lesson, and when I do not think her answer right, I find it out myself, and frequently she is wrong. Now I have just found it so. I declare I know more than she does. This young lady was the youngest in the senior class, but a very smart little girl ; her information made me more attentive to the next class, in which one of the young ladies recited for the first time. She spoke distinct, and I thought quick enough to be understood : Mary Austin did not think so, for she said,—‘ Go on quicker, or I shall never get through.’ She then put the question, ‘ Can liquids and solids be contained in the same space ? ’—‘ Yes,’ said the pupil. Mary Austin did not correct her,

but passed it over as if it were right. I thought the new pupil was trying the same experiment as the former one, for she certainly knew her answer was wrong.

“ During this time Mary Benedict was teaching Miss Fraser French. Mary Austin called two more classes during the forenoon, but I had to attend to my own studies, as Mary Benedict said she intended to call us up to recite. We did not recite every day. Sometimes three days would pass without saying our lessons, and often two. Mary Benedict never made mistakes like Mary Austin, but she very often neglected her class, and spent all the morning with Miss Fraser on some fancy work. At a quarter before eleven the bell rings for prayer. We knelt as before, when one of the young ladies read the Lord's prayer five times, and the others responded. After this we had hardly taken our seats when the bell rung for dinner, to which we went as we had done before to breakfast. After the blessing, a piece of boiled meat was handed to each of us, accompanied by one potatoe. Each meal is eaten in silence. The young ladies never ask for any thing; if they do not like what is given them, they may dine upon bread and water; and some of them did so

when we had no dessert : occasionally we had some. After we had eaten our beef, which was hard work for me to do, they handed us a piece of hasty-pudding and molasses. Some of the young ladies appeared to like the dessert very much. It was not so with me. During each meal one of the young ladies read until she was helped, and the first finished took up the book and continued. The books read were always upon religious subjects, and I think must have been designed entirely for Roman Catholics. After dinner we all wash our hands in the same basin, two or three at once, and returning, seat ourselves until the others have washed, when we all return to the school-room unless the Superior says we may walk out. When we walk outside of the door, one of the Religieuses is always with us. We are obliged to walk up and down that walk in front of the Convent, and are not allowed to stop or sit down. When this hour is expired, we return in the same order that we went out. An 'offering' is made, and we commence our afternoon studies. The afternoon for drawing, and they all took out their drawing books and began to draw ; Mary Benedict began to draw also. I thought it very strange she did not walk and show the pupils how to do as

my drawing-master used to do ; but I was very soon satisfied that her system was a new one by the following conversation among the pupils : ‘ Abby, I really think it is too bad ; Mary Benedict never shows us how to do ; now, since we have begun to colour, I think she ought to show us what colours to put on : I will go and show her this.’ She went and showed Mary Benedict her flower ; Mary Benedict looked at it, and said that she improved very fast.”

A variety of particulars are then related by the “ Daughter,” respecting attendance upon prayers and the occurrences at supper, which, though in some particulars interesting, are here omitted. She then proceeds to say—“ Sabbath morning we rise at the usual time. When we come down, we bring our bonnets with us, and after prayers *we go into the Bishop’s room to hear mass, &c.*, which is said by the Bishop in the chapel. The chapel is a room in the centre of the building, to which the stairs lead that you see in front of the Convent. It is separated from the Bishop’s room in the same manner as the visiting parlours. The Religiouses are in a recess upon the opposite side, called *the Community*, which is also separated in

the same way, with only this difference, their curtain is drawn. *We kneel the greater part of the time that mass is saying*, and I do not think it is pleasant to kneel upon the hard floor so long.

"At two o'clock we go to vespers, which is said by the Nuns in the Community, with the curtain and chapel between them and us.

"When *we go to mass and vespers* we always wear our bonnets."

"*Mother*. Tell what else you recollect, for I think I shall not again send you there till I know more of the school."

"*Daughter*. I knew several young ladies who left in the middle of the term, and their money was not returned to them. The expense for a year was two hundred and forty dollars deposited, besides extra charges for all the branches except common ones. Twelve dollars and a quarter extra was charged for French and drawing. The Superior used to represent it as a very great favour that she took the pupils. I have known her to write to the friends of one of the pupils after she had left, that she (the Superior) had no interest whatever in view when she received her into the Convent; and that the desire of doing her good in regard to her educa-

tion, and obliging a person who was the agent for the school, were the sole reasons that induced her to consent to do so.

“The parting benediction of the Superior, to those young ladies who left the school was, ‘*Now, my love, be sure to give a good account of the Convent.*’ I think the Lady Superior can hardly forget the reply of one of the mothers on one of those occasions, when she said, ‘*A true account is a good account, Madam.*’”

“We never saw any Protestant visitors in the school-room. Last coronation day, the Superior refused to allow some of the parents of the young ladies, who were at the Convent, to see that ceremony, although they desired it, telling them it was against the rules of the institution to allow admission to any except the Right Rev. Bishop and clergy, and those belonging to the institution. The young ladies could not write home any thing, although the Superior sometimes said they might. She cannot forget that she reprimanded two young ladies from the State of New-York for the first letters that they wrote home, saying, that if they sent those letters *people would think it was not a good school.* She made them write others, and put in them that they were allowed some refreshment before they

went to bed. At another time, a young lady from Canada wrote that she was afraid she should forget her French at the Convent. The Superior made her take that part out of her letter. The pupils had moulded bread given to them frequently, and one of them was supplied with bread by her parents before Miss F. ran home with a piece of moulded bread in her pocket. Her father talked to the Superior, as the pupils understood; and I think there was not any more moulded bread given to them. The Lady Superior told the young ladies, when Mr. Maeder taught singing, that he charged thirty dollars, and that Mrs. Barrymore charged fifteen for dancing.—The young ladies were *constantly seeing or hearing something calculated to impress their minds with the Catholic religion*, and I think it is difficult for any one to remain there a long time, under these influences, *without being very much affected in their religious belief.*"

"I am sure no parent would wish to send a daughter to such a school if they knew how small the advantages really are. The expenses are as high as almost any Protestant school in Boston; and after all there are only females to teach, who, except Miss Mary Benedict, are badly qualified. We have no apparatus to in-

struct by except two small globes : nothing in astronomy, chemistry, botany, or natural philosophy. The school comes no where near the Prospectus which they publish, and the books there named are not the books studied. Miss Austin, who gave some instruction in botany, did not know what the petal of a flower was. There was nothing to explain by, and she merely heard the young ladies recite, without ever explaining any thing. A very intelligent young lady came to the school, who, I believe, had studied botany before she came there. The scholars carried their flowers to her, and she explained them.

“ Boston, April, 1835.”

“ A young lady, a pupil at the school, was taken away by her guardian at her request. An attempt was made at the Convent to influence another pupil to write to the friends of the young lady who had left, that she had been expelled.”

“ Miss Stacy, of Gloucester, (Mass.) who was a pupil at the Charlestown Nunnery, (and now resides in the West,) related the following particulars to a friend :—She was in the Convent in 1831 or 1832. Her age was seventeen or eighteen. She went there as a scholar of

the public school, supposing the literary advantages superior. She was assured that if she went she should see her friends when she wished, and write to them freely. When she went to the Convent, she observed that the young ladies wore their hair short, and wished to know if she should be obliged to do the same, which she should regret. She was assured that *her own inclination* should be consulted *entirely*. The next day her hair was cut *without asking her consent*, and *her Bible and hymn-book were taken from her*. *She was also required to bow to the Virgin Mary*, and repeat some Latin, of the meaning of which she was ignorant. The provisions at table were miserable, very little was provided, the bread usually sour, &c. While at meals they were not allowed to raise their eyes, or converse. Miss S. wrote to her friends, not expecting her letters would be opened by the Superior, but they were invariably. When her friends visited her, she was obliged to converse with them *not seeing them*, a curtain intervening and a Nun standing by her side. She was there but a few weeks before she became so very unhappy, she determined to escape; supposing, however, it would be at the risk of her life. She finally effected her escape

from the Convent by jumping through a very small window of an outhouse, six feet high ; and then, by a strength which she thought almost supernatural, clambered up to the top of the fence, which was perhaps ten feet high, and fell over on the other side. Though it stormed very violently, her fear of detection was so great, that she ran two miles without a bonnet, to the house of a relation in Cambridge. Persons whom she met supposed her deranged, and endeavoured to stop her ; but fearing they might be Catholics, she spoke to no one. She arrived at her relative's nearly exhausted, and was taken care of. The Superior used many exertions to effect her return, and retained her clothes ; but her friends were so very decided that all were returned to her. Miss S. was reluctant to say much respecting her situation at the Convent. She was repeatedly asked if she could not have been happy after she had become habituated to their manners, and if the above circumstances were the only cause of her leaving. She uniformly said that she could have remained if that were all ; but the *principal cause of her wretchedness she never would mention to her nearest friends, and wished them not to ask her.*"

This is followed by a number of certificates and statements, showing that a Catholic influence was used at the Convent—one young lady could repeat in Latin, French, and English, every prayer, mass, laude, vesper, Ave Maria, &c.—a little girl, about seven years of age, who had returned to her former school after having been less than a year at the Convent, frequently taught the children to make the sign of the Cross, and say the Hour, one of the forms of prayer used by the Catholics. A young lady, who had been a pupil at the Convent, says that she was obliged to bow to the Virgin Mary and make the sign of the Cross. A Miss Dill, of Nova Scotia, who had left the Convent and finished her education at a school in Boston, would say she would rather die than go back, there was so much mystery ; and that it was *almost impossible to be there without becoming a Catholic*. A gentleman residing in Boston, whose wife's sister attended the Convent school when it was in that city, informed him that she had to *kiss or lick the floor*. A young lady of Boston was at the Convent school about nine months. She states that the Superior read the letters which the pupils wrote to their friends—no visitors on any occasion were allowed to go

into the school-room ; the usual punishments in the school were making a young lady sit on the top of a high pyramid, or flight of steps, in a conspicuous place, *putting their feet in the stocks, and kissing the floor.* Kissing the floor was understood to be one of the punishments to mortify those who broke the rules.

To this last document is added—"The statements in Miss Reed's narrative, and the foregoing statements of young ladies who were at the school, and which I have seen, I believe to be correct as far as my knowledge of the Convent extended. I saw Miss Reed there occasionally, who appeared as a novice ; and it was understood she was one of the Religieuses until she made her escape, after which *the scholars were told to contradict whatever she might tell.* The ceremonies, religious services, &c., *were calculated to make a great impression on the minds of the pupils in favour of the Catholic religion.*"

On the character of the Catholic Colleges and Convents, as places of education, the following passage is extracted from the Appendix, from which we have already copied so largely—

"The deception, in regard to the means of education furnished in Catholic Colleges and Nunneries, if fairly exposed, would prevent any

rational Protestant from ever preferring them to our own schools and universities. They are miserably behind the intelligence of the age. The Catholic Colleges are merely indifferent boys' schools, and the Nunneries are inferior women's schools, where the teachers generally are not superior to those engaged in our primary schools."

CHAPTER X.

REFLECTIONS on the licentiousness of Convents, both in Europe and America.—Miss Monk's book true?—The evidence appears conclusive.—Of internal and external evidences in its favour.—Natural tendency of monasteries to degradation.

BUT there is still a worse, a more shocking feature in the case, than either secrecy or despotism; it is that of the most detestable and abominable licentiousness and profligacy of manners and morals. If Miss Monk's book is entitled to credit, the Black Nunnery at Montreal is nothing less than a brothel of the worst possible description. This institution professedly holds out to young females of delicacy and virtue the strongest inducements which religion

and piety can furnish to enter its walls; and there, under the superintendence and parental watchfulness and care of venerable matrons, and priestly guardians and protectors, to devote their lives to the service of God and the duties of religion. But the moment they enter its walls, and their residence in the cloister is secured, they are carefully secluded from the observation and knowledge of their friends and the world, and are delivered over by their ghostly procuresses to the savage and brutal lusts of men professing to be ministers of religion, sworn to live lives of purity and chastity, and devoted to the service of a sin-hating and sin-avenging God. Nor is this all. Having violated their oaths, and robbed the helpless victims of their unbridled passions of their purity, the natural fruits of their licentious intercourse, after having in mockery of one of the solemn ordinances of the religion which they profess to believe, venerate, and practise, having been dedicated to God, are murdered before the baptismal font, for the purpose of shrouding in the darkness of the grave the evidence of their brutality and crimes.

Nor is this all. For offences which the authorities of the Convent think proper to consider

as worthy of death, the penalty is inflicted in the most deliberate and the most inhuman manner—in a manner unknown to the laws of any civilized country on the globe.

The question may be asked, "Is this book entitled to credit?" If it is, among Protestants at least there ought not to be differing opinions. The answer to the inquiry will depend upon evidence—and that will be in the first place, *internal*; and in the second, *external*.

With regard to the first, it is strongly in favour of the veracity of the work. The style is plain and simple, without any attempt at high colouring, or any effort to excite the feelings; it tells an artless story in clear language; narrates many circumstances and transactions; gives a description of the Convent, which can be easily disproved if it is not correct; mentions the names of many individuals connected with the history, and describes the parts in which they were severally concerned. If this is all fabrication, there can be no difficulty in proving it to be so, because the witnesses are numerous and their testimony easily attainable. There are also some things entitled to more particular notice. If the Convent is not correctly described by Miss Monk, she has gone into so many particu-

lars, that the truth can be easily made manifest. She has staked the credit of her story upon this issue, and is willing to abide the result of a fair examination of the edifice by persons worthy of confidence. This is decisive proof that she believes her own story; and if the offer which she has made is not accepted, and such an examination is not made, it will establish the truth of her "Disclosures" in the opinion of the great body of intelligent and disinterested readers.

Again. The account given by her of the murder of the nun, Saint Francis, notwithstanding the history of that most atrocious transaction, is related in the most plain, simple, unimpassioned language, and no person who considers the true state of the case will believe it to be a work of the imagination. Miss Monk is described, by those who are personally acquainted with her, to be ignorant of the world, simple in her ideas, and unaffected in her manners; and of course incapable of fabricating and narrating such an account of such a transaction, with all its accompanying circumstances and affecting incidents. The story, short as it is, for simplicity and pathos is not unworthy the genius and talents of a Scott. It is scarcely possible that it could have been devised and narrated by an un-

educated woman, so entirely uninstructed in the ways of the world into which she had so recently entered.

Equally incredible is it that such a person as she is described to be, could have drawn from her own imagination, and with such dramatic force, a character like that of Jane Ray. Her character is not only novel, but original ; and it is delineated with a degree of clearness, force, and consistency, that would do no discredit to a much more experienced writer of decided genius and ability.

All these parts of Miss Monk's book bear strong internal proof of its truth and credibility. Besides, the moral condition of the Montreal Convent is precisely such as the monastic system is in its very nature calculated to produce. The doctrine of the celibacy of the clergy, established by the dogmas or decrees of the Pope and the Catholic Church, must necessarily be the fruitful source of profligacy and licentiousness in the lives of those who are subjected to its influence and control. One of the earliest declarations respecting the future moral and social welfare of man by his all-wise and benevolent Creator was, "*That it is not good for Man to be alone : I will make a help meet for him ;*" and

the union, thus formed by Almighty wisdom and power, was made the great basis of the domestic and social happiness of the human race. The mandate of Papal authority, which prescribed a life of celibacy among the ecclesiastics of that church, was a direct violation of the command of God, and an arrogant and impious attempt to change a most important provision in his moral and social system. Hence it was natural to conclude that the attempt would prove abortive; that, however infallible the Head of the Romish Church might believe himself to be, when he came to measure his strength with Omnipotence, and his wisdom with that of his all-wise Creator, he would discover his own impotence, arrogance, and folly. The experiment has proved that neither Popes nor Councils can withstand or reverse the decrees of God; and that when the Creator of Popes speaks, *it is done*; and when he commands, *it stands fast*. The evidence of facts, which will be adduced in support of these remarks, will not be drawn from any Protestant source; it will be derived from the Catholic Church, from its prelates and votaries—witnesses whose veracity cannot be impeached, and whose credibility cannot be shaken. The facts which they

relate fell under their own observation; they were eye-witnesses of the scenes they describe.

No person can fail to see that the necessary tendency of such a system must be to a gross demoralization of the minds of those subjected to its practical influence. And, especially, when forced upon those who are inexperienced, under the mask of piety and a professed devotion to a life of religious duty and self-denial, it would be little short of miraculous if it did not in the end corrupt the morals and contaminate the principles of every individual on whom it was made to operate.

But the government established in these institutions is as debasing as it is severe and despotic. The moment a female is introduced within the walls of a cloister, every effort is made to humble and degrade her. Under the pretence of teaching, by example as well as precept, a spirit of Christian humility, a series of absurd, ridiculous, disgraceful, and disgusting penances are ordered; and delicate females are obliged, by fear of punishment either in this world or in the next, to submit to them. To kiss the floor, to make the sign of the cross upon the floor with the tongue, to kiss the Lady Superior's feet, to drink the water in which her

Ladyship's feet had been washed, to walk across the floor upon their knees, to kneel upon pebbles until a wound had been produced, to walk with dry peas in their shoes, &c. &c., these are inflicted as penances for the heinous sin of looking up after passing through an entry, smiling when they should appear grave, lying in bed a few minutes too late, &c. &c. ; and these are resorted to as among the means of obtaining salvation. At the same time, penances of a much more severe and rigorous description are enforced upon the nuns at the pleasure of an unfeeling, unjust, and domineering woman, invested with the imposing title of "*Lady Superior*." For any thing that she pleases to consider a more serious offence than such as have been enumerated, Nuns are sentenced to cells and dungeons, shut out from the light, forced to lie upon the ground with nothing but straw for a bed, fed upon the coarsest food, and denied the miserable comforts that are dealt out by the ministers of the law in our own country to the convicts in a state prison. These punishments are awarded for whatever the Superior and her associates in authority are pleased to denominate offences ; and are made to extend for any length of time which their resentments or their vengeance

may please to prescribe. In all criminal cases under the laws of the country, those laws provide the mode of trial, and, in the event of conviction, prescribe the measure of punishment. But in the monastic code, the will of the Superior is the law ; and the form of trial such as that personage prescribes, and the punishment such as arbitrary and vindictive authority thinks proper to order.

Those trials, according to Miss Monk's account of the Black Nunnery at Montreal, are sufficiently brief, the conviction sure, and the execution of the sentence instantaneous and effectual. No person can read her history of what occurred in her presence without being shocked at the exhibition which she witnessed of savage cruelty and of hardened and deliberate wickedness and barbarity. Murders perpetrated in cool blood upon new-born infants, merely to screen from infamy and indignation the authors of their being ; and upon an unoffending and most interesting young female, attended by circumstances of suffering which would shock the feelings of savages, are among the events recorded by her in her "Disclosures."

CHAPTER XI.

NATURAL tendency of Monasteries to vice and crime.—
Injurious to health.—Designed to teach Popery—Specimens of Anti-Christian principles taught by Popish standard writers.

It has already been remarked, that the inculcation of the duty of *obedience* and *secrecy* appeared to be the object of the "obligation" which was administered to, and taken by, Miss Reed soon after she entered the Convent. By the terms of that oath the novice bound herself "*to do whatever obedience prescribed,*" and to "*tell no one of the obligation but her confessor Mr. B. in confession.*" It is very easy to imagine what effects would be produced upon the mind of a young female placed in such circumstances, and held, as she would naturally conclude herself to be, by the strongest vows under which the conscience could be bound. And those effects are manifest, both in the narration of Miss Reed and in that of Miss Monk. It will be borne in mind that the unfortunate residents of the Convents are at the outset made to believe that there is not the slightest possible

chance or hope of salvation out of the Romish church ; that in it there is an absolute certainty of it, if the rules of the church are complied with, confession is duly made, and absolution from the Priest obtained. The very fascinating as well as very convenient doctrine, that the Catholic can, by his own exertions and *good works*, and the friendly assistance of his Confessor, obtain admission to Heaven, places the believer in the impious dogmas of the church under the absolute control and influence of the clerical authorities ; and they are easily persuaded to believe that the Bishop, or the Confessor, can remit their sins, and that their certificate will be a sure and infallible passport to future felicity. Hence the officers of these Monastic institutions, having the inmates of the Convent secluded from all intercourse not merely with the world at large, but even with their nearest connexions, relatives, and friends, are able to establish over them an absolute and terrific despotism, which enslaves not merely the body but enchains and fetters the conscience and the soul. Hence it is found, in all instances where the inside of these institutions is unfolded to the view of the world, that of all tyrants, the most severe, unfeeling, and unrelenting, is the head of

a Convent ; of all kinds of human slavery, that of Monks and Nuns is the most abject and the most degrading. When secrecy and obedience are enjoined by the solemnity of an oath and enforced by absolute power, not only over the actions but over the consciences and the everlasting happiness of the subjects of it, what better can be expected than the establishment of such a system of fraud and falsehood, of deceit and cunning, as is disclosed in the narratives of these two females. When Miss Reed told the sick and feeble Nun, Mary Magdalene, when she was at work "with trembling hands," that it gave her pain to see the latter distress herself so, the Nun answered with a peculiar emphasis, "*Sister, Obedience !*" If letters were received by the Nuns from their friends, they were opened and examined by the Superior ; and if they contained any thing that was not pleasing to that haughty and tyrannical woman, they were suppressed ; and if the Nuns wrote letters to their friends they must be examined before they were suffered to leave the Convent by the same exalted personage, in order to ascertain whether they contained any thing of which she did not approve. Nor was this the most reprehensible part of the system. When the friends of any

of the Nuns called at the Convent to see them, or to inquire after their welfare, if they were refused admittance, and it was thought expedient to deceive them in any particular, some of the Nuns were deputed with express orders to tell them a falsehood; or if they were admitted, they were not permitted to see or converse with them, except in the presence of a spy of some sort to overhear every thing.

It is very difficult to imagine any inducement any person, and especially Protestants, can have to send their children to such schools as have been described. From the representations made in the "Supplement" to Miss Reed's publication, it is quite apparent that they are, as it regards instruction merely, of a very inferior character. It is stated in the Appendix to the work just mentioned, that they are "miserably behind the intelligence of the age." A young gentleman, who had received a diploma as graduate of St. Joseph's college at Bardstown, a celebrated Catholic institution, was found upon examination unqualified to enter the freshman class at Harvard College in Massachusetts. The teachers at the female seminaries are exclusively Nuns, who are said to be, and in the Charlestown Convent were, if the certificates of

their pupils are to be relied upon, altogether unfit for the business of instruction. There can be no question that schools of a higher order, and teachers of vastly superior qualifications, may be found in every direction over a large proportion of our country.

But there are other serious objections to Catholic seminaries. The diet is described as not only extremely poor and scanty, but in some instances must have been unwholesome. They are obliged to perform many menial services, and are subjected to many rules and regulations, which, however important they may be considered in the case of novices and Nuns, are not suitable to the character or pursuits of Protestant pupils. "The Protestant scholars, as well as the others, were obliged to attend *mass* in the morning and *vespers* at night. At meals, Catholic prayers were read by the pupils alternately.—They were required also to repeat the Roman Catholic creed." One young lady went to mass at the Charlestown seminary in her plain common bonnet. The Superior ordered her to go into the passage-way, and kneel till she was sent for. The pupils were never allowed to be alone, or without the supervision of one of the Nuns. They were required to be

present when high mass for the dead was performed. All the Catholic services at the Convent (with some exceptions) were generally performed in the presence of the scholars, who were required to attend in the chapel. The expenses of the school were very high; their letters were all examined by the Superior before they were suffered to be sent away, apparently under the apprehension that they might contain something that would affect the character of the school—they were required to bow to the Virgin Mary—a young Protestant pupil in the Convent could repeat in Latin, French, and English, every mass, prayer, laude, vesper, Ave Maria, &c.—they are taught to make the sign of the Cross, and to say “*the hour*” (a form of prayer used by the Catholics). A Mr. Appleton certifies that it *was against the rules of the Convent to allow any one to visit the school*; and the mother of two young ladies received the same information from the same source; the pupils were ordered as a punishment to kneel and kiss the floor.

Such a course of life, with such a diet, could scarcely fail to be injurious to the constitutions and health of delicate females. But a far worse consequence is always to be apprehended, and

that is, the conversion of the pupils to the Catholic faith. That this is the great object of the establishment of their nunneries and schools in the United States does not admit of a doubt. Who can be credulous enough to believe that men, who were born and educated in a foreign country, and many of them in countries where a vast proportion of the inhabitants, and especially those of their own faith, are unable to read even the alphabet, should feel such an extraordinary degree of attachment to literature as to leave their homes, cross the ocean, settle in a land of strangers, where schools are in almost every village and neighbourhood, and where, at least in many parts of the country, it is difficult to find an individual who was born there who cannot both read and write, merely to take upon themselves the task of teaching letters? The object undoubtedly is *to teach the Romish religion, the Catholic faith, and to make proselytes to Popery*. Hence it will be found, that by every artful measure which they can adopt (and they are the most artful of all human beings), by every insinuation, every captivating ceremony, which can be presented to the youthful mind and the excited imagination, they steal upon their fancies, and by sly but dangerous artifices gradu-

ally attach them to the most destructive system of faith and morals which the history of the Christian world has ever known.

By a statement recently published in the newspapers, it is said that in France, one of the most enlightened Catholic countries in Europe, that in that kingdom the number of persons who have no instruction whatever, both children and adults, is nineteen millions three hundred and ninety-one thousand three hundred and ninety-two ; that is to say, sixty-three out of every hundred, or above three fifths of the total population ; deducting one million eight hundred and eleven thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven children under two years of age.

Here is a field large enough to occupy the attention and the labours of all the Nuns who are out of employment and are qualified to instruct others, throughout the whole extent of the dominions of Popery. Even in Ireland, from whence a very large proportion of the Catholics who emigrate from Europe, and make these United States the place of their residence, there is a lamentable want of education among the poorer classes, and especially among the poor of their own faith, which might find employment

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for all the Monks and Nuns who are so busily engaged in their literary labours in our country.

In order to show more fully that the great object of the Catholic schools and seminaries is not primarily the mere business of instruction in letters, but to make proselytes to their faith, the following facts, taken from a publication in the New-York Observer, June 18th, 1831, may be adduced as proof. Mr. Riley, who states them, is a respectable clergyman of the Presbyterian church in the city of New-York, and as he speaks of his own experience, his testimony will not be questioned by any person acquainted with his character. It will be borne in mind that Mr. Riley was sent *to school*, not to a Monastery or a Convent. After a number of introductory remarks, he says :

“Previous to my leaving home, my mother gave me a small Bible, with the hope that I would make a good use of it. But her hopes were all in vain, for, on reaching the College, our trunks were subjected to rigid inspection, and every thing removed beyond our control, except such books or things as they in their wisdom saw fit to entrust us with. Several of my books I never afterwards saw”—among these was his Bible.

He then states, that as soon as they commenced their duties at the College, plans were devised for removing all prejudice from their minds relative to the Romish Church; every student was obliged to attend, faithfully and constantly, on all the religious exercises and instructions of the institution; prayer-books, catechisms, &c., were put into his hands; and he soon declared himself a decided Catholic, and was brought to confession. In consequence of the state of mind he was in, many favours were conferred upon him, and he was raised to several important offices, among which was that of Sacristan; among the duties of which, he was to attend to the decorations of the altar, to the vestments of the priests, and to the necessary arrangements for the celebration of mass, to the lamp kept constantly burning before the consecrated host, to the supply of holy water, &c. Before the host, or wafer, every student was obliged to bow the knee in worship. Having fully imbibed the sentiment which the officers of the College industriously endeavoured to impress on the minds of all—that out of the Catholic church, *there is no possible salvation*, and having formed the determination to become a Priest and a Jesuit, he confessed every

week, received the Sacrament every sabbath, and sometimes three times a week; and so self-evident to his mind was the truth of the doctrines he had imbibed, that he meant on his return home to state them to his parents, in order to convince them of their "Heresy," in order to insure their salvation; and having accomplished that object, it was his purpose to return to the college, and to live and die a Jesuit. He had usually about half a dozen sins to confess; such as a feeling of impatience, a hasty word towards a companion, &c., &c.; and having concluded the recital, he added, and for these and all the other sins of his past life, he begged absolution; after which, and having some slight penance, such as repeating a few prayers to the Virgin Mary, to perform, he received absolution. Afterwards he borrowed a knotted whip of one of the Priests, and inflicted upon himself voluntary flagellation; and sometimes he took a more painful instrument of suffering, and subjected himself to much more distressing pain than the whip occasioned. The letters of the pupils were all inspected before they were sent away. The impressions which he received while at the College respecting the Catholic religion were deep; and years passed away before they were

effaced. Among the superstitious observances which he brought away from the College, was that of abstinence from animal food on Fridays.

This is only one out of thousands, and probably tens of thousands, which have occurred, and which with sufficient pains might be adduced, to show it is the Catholic faith, and not literary instruction, for which their schools and seminaries are established. By a statement in the Supplement to "Six Months in a Convent," it appears that there were in the United States, at the time that book was published, ten Catholic Colleges, nine Seminaries for young men, thirty-one Monasteries and Convents for young ladies, thirty Seminaries for young ladies, and twenty-nine Schools for Sisters of Charity—making, in the whole, *one hundred and nine*.

It will be observed, that the pupils in the Catholic schools are not only obliged to attend the religious services of the Catholics, but the odious and degrading system of Penances is practised upon Protestants as well as Catholics. Let it be borne in mind, that penance in the Catholic system does not mean merely punishment. In the version of the New Testament, instead of the word *Repentance*, as used in the Protestant version, they substitute the word *Penance*. The 17th

verse of the 4th chapter of Matthew, in the English Protestant version is, "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In the Catholic version it is—"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, *Do Penance*, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In the Protestant English version, the 23d verse of the 20th chapter of John, is—"Whosoever sins ye *remit*, they are *remitted* unto them; and whosoever sins ye *retain*, they are *retained*." In the Catholic version, it is—"Whose sins you shall *forgive*, they are *forgiven* them: and whose you shall *retain*, they are *retained*." In the annotation of the Rhemish Testament upon this passage it is said—"Power to offer sacrifice, which is the principal function and act of the Priesthood, was given them at the Blessed Sacrament: the second and next special faculty of Priesthood, consisting in remitting sins, is here bestowed on them. And withal, the holy Sacrament of Penance, implying Contrition, Confession, and *Satisfaction* in the Penitent and absolution on the Priest's part, is instituted: for in that, that express power and commission is given to priests to remit or retain all sins: and in that, that Christ promiseth, whose sins soever they

forgive, they be of God forgiven also : and whose sins they retain, they be retained before God : it followeth necessarily, that we be bound to submit ourselves to their judgment for the release of our sins. *For this wonderful power were given them in vain if none were bound to seek absolution at their hands.* Neither can any rightly seek for absolution of them, unless they confess particularly at least all their mortal offences ; whether they be committed in mind, heart, will, and cogitation only, or in word and work : for *God's priests being in this Sacrament of penance constituted in Christ's stead as judges in causes of our conscience, cannot rightly rule our cases without full and exact cognition and knowledge of all our sins, and the necessary circumstances and differences of the same.* Which cannot otherwise be had of them, being mortal men, than by our simple, sincere, and distinct utterance to them of our sins, with humble contrite heart, ready to take and to do penance according to their injunction. For that authority to retain sins consisteth specially *in enjoining satisfaction* and penitential works of praying, fasting, alms, and such like. All which God's ordinance, whosoever condemneth or contemneth, as Heretics do, or neglecteth,

as some careless Catholics may perhaps do, let them be assured they cannot be saved. *Neither must any such Christian man pretend or look to have his sins, after Baptism, remitted by God only, without this Sacrament."*

The same general course of instruction appears to have been pursued towards the Protestant pupils in the Ursuline Convent at Charlestown. They were obliged to attend mass upon the sabbath, and to kneel while it was saying; they were taught to make the sign of the Cross, to bow to the Virgin Mary, to hear and to read Catholic prayers, the "Ave Maria," &c.; and they were subjected to various penances, kissing the floor, making the sign of the Cross on the floor with their tongues, kissing the Lady Superior's feet, &c. &c. As it was comparatively a new establishment in the midst of a Protestant community, and favoured with Protestant pupils in the school, it is not strange that they had not proceeded to as great lengths in their system of instruction, and particularly in that of discipline, as they might safely have done in a Catholic country. But it is apparent, from the extracts we have made from the publication just mentioned, that their efforts were directed to the great object of gaining proselytes

to their faith, rather than to their improvement in literature and science.

CHAPTER XII.

THE Roman Catholic Institutions inimical to American Liberty and Independence.—Other specimens of the unchristian principles taught by Roman Catholics.—Effects of Popery in Europe.

ALLUSION has been made to the power assumed by Popes to govern and control the internal affairs of nations, over which he had contrived to extend, in the first place, ecclesiastical, and in the second, civil jurisdiction. This usurpation, the most unprincipled, the most degrading, and the most tyrannical that has ever been experienced in any portion of the civilized world, was exhibited in a great variety of forms as well as places ; and was founded upon the preposterous idea, that the inhabitants of Christendom, over nearly the whole surface of which the Papal sway for a long time extended, having been baptized into that church, had, by the necessary consequences of the performance of that rite, become his subjects ; and if, on any oc-

casion, any portion of them detached themselves from his spiritual jurisdiction, they became Héretics ; and, as such, were liable to civil as well as ecclesiastical censure and punishment. This principle is to be found in a work of the highest authority in papal estimation. In the annotations to the Rhemish New Testament—a work which has been heretofore several times adverted to in the annotations upon the 14th chapter of Luke, at 23d verse—it may be found. The Protestant translation of this verse differs very little from the Catholic. In the former version it is—“And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.” The Catholic version is—“And the Lord said to the servant, Go forth into the ways and hedges, and compel them to enter, that my house may be filled.” The note upon it is as follows—“*Compel to come in.*” The vehement persuasion that God useth, both externally by his force of word and miracles, and internally by his grace, to bring us unto him, is called compelling: not that he forceth any to come to him against their-wills, but that he can alter and mollify a hard heart, and make him willing that before would not. Augustine also

shall find all definitions and marks of a Heretic to fall upon themselves. And therefore they must not marvel if we warn all Catholic men by the words of the Apostle in this place, to take heed of them, to shun their preachings, books, conventicles, and companies. Neither need the people be curious to know what they say, much less to confute them; but they may trust God's Church, which doth refute and condemn them." By Heretics, then, is intended all that do not belong to and believe in the Catholic Church; that is, the Pope, Cardinals, &c. Of course all Protestants are included in the number; and, as such, they are considered and treated by Catholics whenever they speak of them; and over them it is held, that the power of the Hierarchy tends, not merely in ecclesiastical, but in civil concerns. In a note on the 6th verse of the 10th chapter of the 2d of Corinthians it is said: "*To revenge. You may see hereby that the spiritual power of the Bishops is not only in preaching the Gospel, and so by persuasion and exhortation only, as some Heretics hold, to remit or retain sins; but that it hath authority to punish, judge, and condemn Heretics and other like rebels.*"

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to the course of destruction, there was no resource, except to institute in the infected provinces, with the direct co-operation of the ruling powers, a separate tribunal for causes of heresy. By the council held at Toulouse in 1229, a canon was published, which united "one priest with three laymen," as a sort of council of inquisition. It is this regulation which is reasonably considered as the foundation of the *Court of Inquisition*.

"To Pope Gregory IX. be ascribed the honour of this success. Still the court thus established continued to be a court of bishops. Its object was, indeed, exclusively such as the most zealous Pontiff could have desired ; but it was composed of materials neither wholly destitute of human feeling, nor blindly subservient to the Papal will. A further change was therefore necessary ; and accordingly, about three years afterwards, Gregory found the means to transfer the authority in the new court to the Dominican order. It was thus that the Inquisition, properly so called—that is, *a court for the trial of heretics, erected by Papal authority and administered by Papal dependents*—was indeed instituted."*

* Waddington's History of the Church (Harper's N. Y. ed.) 358-9.

Spain was the country where this horrible tribunal exercised its most terrific force. It was established during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, 1483, and continued, after having been suppressed by Bonaparte, revived by Ferdinand VII., and finally destroyed by the Constitutional government, until the year 1820. During that period, it is computed that thirty-four thousand six hundred and fifty-four persons were burnt alive, eighteen thousand and forty-nine were burnt in effigy, and two hundred and eighty-eight thousand two hundred and fourteen were condemned to the galleys or to prisons. The proceedings in this *court* were in secret; torture, in its most dreadful forms, was used to draw confessions from the accused; spies were placed in every neighbourhood and almost in every family; and the population of the country at large held their lives in the utmost dread and fear from day to day; and the result was, that, in addition to the immense number of lives destroyed and persons imprisoned, two millions of Jews and Moors were computed to have been driven out of the kingdom into exile during the tyrannical reign of the sovereigns above-mentioned.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE bloody experience of Europe should warn America to beware of Papal influence.—Roman Catholic institutions, being under the control and direction of a foreign power, should be made by law subject to visits and inspection.—The privacy which they claim should be entirely broken up.—All our own institutions of learning are liable to visitation.—Exposure to scrutiny would break up Convents.

SUCH were the consequences of the establishment of Papal power in Europe. Is it expedient for the people of the United States to make an experiment of its effects in "this" free republic? There may be no danger at the present time of the establishment of an Inquisition like that which desolated Spain; nor, perhaps, would it be an easy matter to, set one up in all former terrors in any Catholic country in Europe at this period of the world. But the reason why it could be impracticable must not be sought for in the character of the Pope or of Popery, but in the advancement which even Catholic nations have made in modern days in religious as well as civil and political freedom, and in a knowledge of their rights as men and as rational

beings. The Catholic Church is the same that it was in the darkest ages, the character of the sovereign Pontiff is the same ; and if the power which once made Europe tremble could now be exercised with the same energy and success that it was before Luther's Reformation, Inquisitions would still be found spreading terror, consternation, and misery, over a large portion of Continental Europe. And even in this country, if suffered to establish their convents and seminaries, and conduct them with such impenetrable secrecy and severity of discipline as seems now to be the practice, though we might not be subjected to the *auto de fe*, nor to burnings at the stake, nor to the chains and servitude of the galleys, still we might reasonably expect, in process of time, that nuns will be suspended by their feet with their heads downwards, sentenced to degrading penances and the most barbarous imprisonments, until their constitutions are destroyed and their lives sacrificed ; that infants, the fruits of licentious intercourse between the priests and nuns, will be strangled ; and contumacious females suffocated for resisting the licentious attacks upon inmates of the school or the cloister.

Such, in some important particulars, is the

character of the Catholic schools and seminaries, which are establishing in great numbers in the United States for the purpose of educating Protestant children and youths. It is a question of the highest importance to the parents and guardians of such children and youths, whether they can, in justice to those who are placed under their care, and for whose future welfare, temporal and spiritual, they are to a considerable degree responsible, trust them in such hands and in such institutions. What parent will hazard a child, what mother will risk a daughter, in a school where she cannot visit her, where she is subjected to such privations, to such examples of falsehood and cunning, to such degrading penances, to such indelicacies, and to such temptations to be drawn aside to a false faith, and to the most imminent danger of making shipwreck of her purity, her virtue, and soul; is a point for Protestants to settle for themselves.

But the community at large have an interest in this subject, and the great object of this book is to appeal to the legislative authorities of the several states, in order to lead them to consider whether a duty of no ordinary magnitude does not rest upon them in regard to it. Ca-

tholic Seminaries and Catholic Convents are established under the authority of a foreign power, and are regulated by rules and laws from a similar source. And as they are conducted by foreigners well known to be the liege subjects of a foreign prince or potentate, whose sway has been more extensively and more severely felt by a large proportion of the civilized world than that of any other sovereign, whether prince, monarch, or emperor; it ought to awake the attention of this free and jealous republic to a subject in which interests of the highest importance are involved, to see to it that the Romish Hierarchy does not set its foot upon the liberties of our country, as their haughty head formerly did upon the necks of European emperors and kings. In order to induce the authorities of the states to interfere to the extent which will be hereafter suggested, it is not necessary that the truth of the publications from which the foregoing extracts have been made, should be absolutely proved and established. Although there is very little room to doubt their correctness, yet if it is rendered even probable, it will most clearly be the duty of those who make laws in these states to protect the lives, guard the morals, and defend the social and personal rights of our

citizens, to adopt the necessary measures for accomplishing these important objects.

If Miss Monk's narrative is entitled to credit, not only the grossest immoralities are committed in the Black Nunnery at Montreal, but crimes of the most aggravated and atrocious character have been, and probably still are, perpetrated there. Has the Pope power to authorise murder in a foreign Protestant country ; can he sanction such shameful licentiousness and profligacy of morals as are described in that book ? The time has been, and it was the darkest and most degraded period in the history of nations, when a decree of a Roman Pontiff laid powerful nations under a *curse*, absolved subjects of their allegiance to their lawful sovereigns, shut up the churches, prohibited all religious services and worship, and reduced the inhabitants to a state of anarchy and lawless freedom ; and this for some cause in which that haughty and impious ecclesiastic had not the slightest right or authority to interfere. And he would do the same thing now if the condition of the world would suffer him to exercise his power.

It is a fact worthy of serious consideration that in every instance in which any improve-

ment in the character of the government of any Catholic nation in Europe has been accomplished, the suppression of Convents has been considered as a measure of the highest importance. This was done at the time of the Reformation in England ; it was done in France during the great revolution ; it has been done in Spain and Portugal, two of the most bigoted countries under Papal dominion, and where the Inquisition, with all its persecutions and horrors, reigned triumphantly for centuries in succession. And even in those portions of that continent where civil freedom has hitherto made very little progress, a wholesome warfare has been waged against these pernicious institutions, and with very salutary effect. Through the medium of newspapers we are informed, that within three or four years no less than three thousand Convents have been suppressed in Russia, Prussia, Portugal, and Spain. Nothing but a strong conviction in the governments of these countries, that these institutions were in their nature and tendency inimical to civil and religious liberty, as well as the public welfare, could have induced them to suppress them.

Probably it is owing to this state of things in Europe that the United States are indebted, to

a considerable extent at least, for the vast importation of Catholicism, within a few years past, into our country; as well as for the great zeal manifested, and the heavy expense incurred, in efforts to establish colleges, schools, and convents in every portion of the Union. Losing influence, and numbers, and power, in the Old World, it is very natural to expect that they would be desirous of gaining them in the New. According to the fundamental principle of their faith, all Protestants, and of course a very great proportion of the United States who are Protestants, are Heretics; and in a state of utter and absolute reprobation as it regards their hopes of happiness in a future world. Knowing that Toleration is universal here, they doubtless are desirous of its practical extension, not merely to the free and unmolested enjoyment of public worship, but to the establishment and management of their Monastic institutions; considering themselves not bound by the laws of the country in the government of their schools, cloisters, and convents, but responsible solely to the Supreme Head of their Church—the Pope at Rome. No religious sect has any just right to the extension of Toleration so far as to reach and include institutions of the description to

which allusion has all along been made. The privilege of worshipping God according to the dictates of their consciences, provided they do not violate the public peace or disturb others in the exercise and enjoyment of the same privilege, is secured to all. But let it be remembered that it is a privilege, and could not have been claimed by any sect differing from the great majority of the people if it had not been, in the spirit of liberality which distinguishes our whole systems of civil regulation, granted to them. The country belongs to the genuine inhabitants of the country, the governments and their institutions are theirs also; and all the advantages which foreigners derive from them, are boons liberally bestowed by the native proprietors of both the country and the government. In no sense can it be considered as comprising within its influence Schools or Convents established under foreign authority, and governed by foreign laws, rules, and regulations. Such a principle can never be admitted in this country unless the governments of the states are prepared to countenance and protect institutions not of a moral or literary character, but of the most corrupt, immoral, and licentious description—institutions, within the secret recesses of

which, not only the most gross and licentious profligacy may prevail, but where crimes of the most aggravated nature known to our laws may be perpetrated with impunity.

This is a *privilege* not granted to any of our own schools and seminaries. On the contrary, institutions of literature and science, our schools and seminaries are regulated by law and open to public inspection ; so that criminal offences, in the very nature of things, cannot be committed in them to any serious extent without speedy detection and suitable punishment. In many parts of the country, visitors and inspectors of schools are appointed from time to time, under the authority of law ; and a constant and effectual vigilance is maintained over both instructors and pupils. No teacher of any School or Seminary, would venture to order his pupils to kiss the floor, or his feet ; to drink the water in which his feet had been washed ; to imprison them for an indefinite period for any conduct which he might disapprove in a cold damp cell or dungeon in a cellar ; to be fed upon bread and water, lodged upon straw, and shut up from the knowledge of friends and the light of day. If male and female institutions, of any description, were placed in edifices in the neighbour-

hood of each other, no subterranean passage would be formed, or suffered to exist between them. Licentious intercourse between the sexes could not be suffered, females could not be suspended by their feet with their heads downward, infants could not be strangled by their criminal parents, nor females suffocated by men claiming to be vicegerents of the Almighty and exercising divine power to remit sins and give passports to heaven.

What good reason can be given for making a marked distinction between the institutions established under and regulated by our own laws, and those that are formed and regulated by the laws of a foreign power—between our own schools and seminaries, which are regulated strictly by our public authorities, and made responsible for all violations of law and trespasses upon morals, and those in which are perpetrated, under the sanction of foreign authority, crimes of the deepest dye, and outrages of the grossest description upon decency and morals.

The proposition then is, to place all schools and seminaries, colleges and convents, upon the same footing that our own schools and seminaries are placed; to render them liable at any time, and all proper times, to the visitation and

inspection of officers appointed by law for the purpose, who shall be clothed with power to enter them at such times and on such occasions as they think proper ; examine the buildings from top to bottom ; ascertain whether there are any secret cells or dungeons which may be used as places of punishment or confinement ; whether there are subterranean passages connecting separate buildings with each other ; inquire into the system of discipline and the course of instruction ; into the qualifications, literary and moral, of the instructors ; and, in short, into the whole system of education, and its effects upon the minds, principles, and understandings of the pupils ;—whose duty it shall be, upon discovering any undue severity of discipline or punishment, or any practices of an immoral, indecent, or illegal nature, to make report to proper authorities ; and, if need be, to shut up and suspend the operations of any school where such practices may be found to exist.

On what ground can this proposition be reasonably objected to by any class or description of persons ? If instruction and education are the sole objects of pursuit in a Catholic school, seminary, or convent, there can be no justifiable cause for shrouding it and its proceedings in

impenetrable secrecy. If charges were made against schools or any literary institutions established by Presbyterians, or Episcopalians, or Baptists, or Methodists, of such a serious nature as are alleged against the Catholic institutions, they could not resist the force of public feeling and opinion for a single day. The founders and proprietors of them would be obliged to throw open their doors, and admit of the most thorough examination, or they would encounter the full energy of public indignation. If there is nothing improper in the mode of conducting Catholic schools and convents, it is impossible that there can be any well-founded opposition to their being subject to public inspection; and the very fact that the proposition for such inspection meets with opposition, will have a strong tendency to convince any disinterested person not only of its propriety, but of the necessity of its being exercised. What exclusive claim can Catholics have to be exempted from the observance of the laws of the country, or what pretext for the enjoyment of the privilege to regulate their conduct by those of a foreign power not known or acknowledged under any of our constitutions of government? Much more difficult is it to imagine what right they have to

set aside the moral and legal restraints of society, to bid them defiance, and in the secrecy of the cloister to commit outrages upon morals, and to perpetrate the most atrocious crimes against the laws and regulations of the community among whom they have thought it expedient to fix their residence? If they are permitted to partake of the same privileges, to experience the same security in their persons, property, and reputations, to enjoy free toleration in public worship, and, in the end, to become citizens of our republics; it is all that they have a right to expect, and all that they can reasonably desire or demand. It would be the height of arrogance in them to claim, and certainly to expect to receive, exclusive privileges and immunities beyond those granted to native citizens of the country.

CHAPTER XV.

THE author submits to the States of the American Union, the question, whether all these *foreign institutions*, which offer such opportunities and encouragement for the perpetration of crime, and whose tendency is directly in opposition to liberty and independence,

should not be rendered, by law, subject to inspection ?
 —Further Reflections on the tendencies of Convents.

THIS subject is therefore respectfully submitted to the consideration of the legislative authorities of the several States of which the Union is composed. They are the constituted guardians of the rights and privileges—moral, religious, and social—of the people by whom they are placed in power, and whose interest they are bound to protect against all inroads from within or without. Foreign influence has always been, and it is to be presumed always will be, a subject of jealousy and of dread by the inhabitants of this country. Of all sorts of tyranny, Ecclesiastical dominion is the object of their greatest abhorrence. Every effort to introduce it amongst us should be watched with the utmost attention and care, and most strenuously resisted at the outset ; for when once it has obtained foothold; it may cost great pains and much effort to root it up and exterminate it.

It may be well, in conclusion, to inquire what would be the effect of the general establishment of Catholic colleges, schools, and convents, in this country, and the education of the youths of both sexes in the doctrines, and according to the usages and principles, religious

and moral, of the Catholic church? If it is advantageous for a small number of Protestant children to be so educated, it must be beneficial to a large number. The fundamental doctrine of that church is *the absolute and uncontrollable supremacy of the Pope over all the affairs of his subjects, temporal and spiritual, civil and ecclesiastical*. This unlimited power the Roman Pontiffs exercised for centuries over a very large portion of Europe; and as their creed is the same now that it was then, nothing is wanting but the means and the opportunity to exert it at the present time on as extensive a scale, and to bring all Christendom under Papal dominion. Infallibility is another distinguishing attribute of his Holiness; so that whatever he wills is necessarily right, and of course must be done. He has authority, too, if we are to believe his own declarations, to forgive sins; and of course to insure his followers, when death removes them from this world, a sure and certain entrance into heaven; and that without his permission they can never enter that happy place. A multitude of other attributes, equally preposterous, absurd, and impious, are claimed by himself, and ascribed to him by his servile and devoted followers; but it is unnecessary to enu-

merate them, as these are sufficient for the present purpose.

What sort of citizens of a free republic, which acknowledges no other sovereign than the people themselves, will such a course of bodily and mental training be likely to raise up? Can the youth, who has been taught to believe that civil as well as spiritual allegiance is due to a foreign potentate, however haughty, arrogant, and blasphemous his claim to universal dominion may be, come upon the stage of life as a free republican, under a written constitutional form of government, and act his part in his country's concerns, with justice to himself and usefulness to his fellow citizens? Can it be to the benefit or credit of such a nation as this, that our sons and daughters should be bred in convents, be changed into Monks and Nuns, professing to believe the doctrine of celibacy, and at the same time practising the most foul and shameless debauchery? Does any friend to the interests, the morals, or the reputation of his country, wish to see it thronged with Monks of the order of Dominicans, Franciscans, or Mendicants; or, what is still worse, with Jesuits? Or is there a disposition in any Protestant American to see our towns lumbered with Convents

and cloisters, and their cells, dormitories, and dungeons, crowded with novices and nuns ?

In short, does any freeborn Protestant citizen of these United States, who believes in the Christian religion, who reads and acknowledges the authority of the sacred Scriptures, who values Republican freedom and independence, acknowledges allegiance to his own government, the unshackled right of opinion on all subjects, political, social, and religious, and the importance of female purity and virtue, flatter himself that the condition of a nation would be improved by becoming a Catholic country ? If there is any such person, he will of course encourage and support Catholic schools, seminaries, and convents ; and will exert himself to the utmost to establish and multiply them, and give them his countenance and support. But let such persons remember what history teaches respecting the consequences of Papal ascendancy in other countries, and, if possible, make a practical use of the solemn lesson. Let them advert to the fires of Smithfield in the time of Mary of England, the persecutions of the Huguenots and the massacre of St. Bartholomew in France, the tortures and the flames of the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal.

It is from history alone that this species of knowledge can be obtained; and the people who shut their eyes and ears to its precepts and its admonitions, must be wilfully blind and stupidly deaf to their own most important interests and welfare. Let it be remembered that the Roman Pontiff is as ambitious, as domineering, and as haughty, and, in his own opinion as infallible, as was ever a Hildebrand, a Gregory, or a Boniface; and that the only reason their disposition is not as manifest now as it formerly was, is the advancement of the human mind, and especially Protestant nations, in knowledge, civil and religious, and their consequent emancipation from Popish thralldom and debasement. Restore to the Papal Hierarchy the power of the dark ages, and every country in Christendom would be again reduced to the same degree of civil and religious slavery which so universally prevailed before the star of Reformation shone upon the nations of Europe. LUTHER despoiled the Pope of a large portion of his arbitrary sway; and thus far he has never been able to retrieve the loss to which the labours of that great man subjected him, both in religious and secular dominion. In Europe, his affairs have experienced a gradual decline from the time of the

GREAT REFORMER to the present day. Will the people of this Republic suffer him to usurp among free, enlightened, and independent Protestants, the despotism which he has lost among his own degraded subjects? "Church and State," intermingled and in co-operation, are not only the dread, but the abhorrence of the inhabitants of these United States. This sentiment will prevail as long as the love of freedom and of civil and religious liberty shall be esteemed and cherished by them.

APPENDIX.

IN the preceding chapters, a brief view has been taken of two or three points, which, it is deemed, deserve a more particular attention before the volume is brought to a close. In the following pages, therefore, will be introduced remarks on the experience of some of those countries in which Convents have been long in operation ; and also some of the testimony which establishes the truth of many of the statements made in the recent work of Miss Monk, for the satisfaction of those persons who are ignorant of the strong corroboration which it has received.

*Results of Experience in relation to Convents,
&c.*

The people of the United States may learn, if they will, some valuable lessons concerning the Convent principles of Education from some of the South American republics. Previously to their revolution and independence, what little education there was in those countries was conducted

by Priests and Nuns. The most intelligent citizens are now generally opposed to these institutions, and in several of the states have laboured for their suppression—and in some degree with success. Many Convents have been suppressed. It is desirable to know in what regard they are held. Many of their most patriotic and enlightened statesmen received their early education in Convents and Seminaries; and therefore may be regarded as well acquainted with their character and tendency. As numbers of those distinguished men, although still attached to the Romish religion, have declared a determined hostility to Convents, their testimony against them must be regarded as entitled to consideration. In the South American publications we may find some of the views they have expressed concerning these institutions.

About three years since an able article appeared in the New Granada government Gazette, published at Bogota, advocating the establishment of a female College for the education of young ladies on the general plan of a North American academy, but under the immediate authority and patronage of the government of the Republic. Among the arguments urged in

its favour was this: that recluses (whatever may be their other qualifications) are incapacitated, by their very condition and habits of life, to act as proper teachers of the young. Dis-severed from society, unlinked from the world, as Roman Priests and Nuns professedly are, even to a change of names, accustomed to a kind of life the opposite of the family state, the writer of the article above alluded to considered them as necessarily disqualified for the task they so often undertake and so often have performed with results disastrous to their pupils and to society. The brief but forcible sketch which he presented of the state of female education in that country, and the allusions he made to that of Spain, whence its customs were derived, are sufficient to impress the reader with most painful ideas of the civil influences which Convent teachers have exerted. In New Granada the effects of their system was established, it is to be presumed, not in an exaggerated form. Indeed, the remaining prejudices of many of the common people probably inclined the writer in question rather to use guarded terms of expression. Yet it was declared, that even the knowledge of reading and writing had been communicated to but few females; and that

the standard of conversation in female society was low and frivolous.

In Spain, it is well known, the general neglect of female education was distinctly proclaimed by those appointed by the late Constitutional Government to make close and accurate inquiries into the subject throughout the kingdom. Those whose duty it was to promote education, not unfrequently opposed the instruction of girls in reading and writing, as opening ways for their becoming corrupted.

Let us observe also what measures have been taken in South America for the correction of the evils complained of. The very point to which the writer of the article in the New Granada government Gazette directed all his attention and arguments was, the establishment of an institution such as had never been known in that country. And what sort of an institution was this? One shut up by high walls, and still more impenetrable rules of secrecy! Was it to be an institution controlled and directed by persons professedly acting without responsibility to public opinion, and under the regulations only of a foreign potentate? Although the New Granadans still consent to bow to the Pope of Rome, and go through the forms

of acknowledging him as the Vicegerent of God on earth, they are not willing any longer, as parents, to trust their children under the exclusive management of his emissaries ; nor, as citizens and legislators, to hazard to such instructors the training of the people. Far from it. An institution was recommended on a plan totally distinct from that of a Convent, and embracing all the characteristics which we have insisted should distinguish every institution of instruction in the United States. It was to be subject to inspection ; to be under the management of a board appointed by the government, with the President of the Republic at its head. The subjects and plan of studies also were to be such as most directly to counteract the Nunnery system of education.

And such an institution was forthwith established and set in operation. The plan, rules, and regulations were laid down, and published with much detail ; as if the more effectually to secure the objects for which it was formed, which are, in effect, some of the great objects that ought ever to be kept in view in American institutions for education, viz. publicity in the plan and conduct, and appropriateness in the branches taught and the methods practised, to

the training of good and useful members of society in a Republican country.

It is worthy of particular remark, then, that the case presented to our attention in the establishment of the female College of Bogota is one of a most decisive bearing against the Convent system. The grand reason urged for its foundation was, that the Convent system of education had been destructive to female intelligence and usefulness; the plan chosen for its direction was one most diametrically opposed to that of the cloisters; the funds appropriated for its support were those of a suppressed nunnery; and since it has been in existence, the friends of sound education in that country have joyfully proclaimed its success and happy influence. It consists at this time of nearly a hundred pupils; and the annual examinations, which attract crowded public assemblies, have done much to correct and elevate the popular opinions concerning female capacity and female duties.

One more remark should be made in relation to this subject. The plan of studies at first introduced into that interesting institution embraced only a range corresponding with such as is taught in hundreds of female schools in American villages. Express provision was indeed

made from the first, for a gradual elevation and extension of the course ; but this low standard was fixed at the commencement, for the reason that public opinion and long continued habits forbade any higher attempt. How strong though sad a proof is this of the depressed and depressing influences of the Convent system of education !

We may surely ask, with emphasis and solemnity, after contemplating this case in its various bearings, whether it can be worth our while to venture upon an experiment with nunneries in our country ; to place our daughters under the care of those mysterious and pretended sages, who come among us denying the very names of their parents, and presenting no recommendation but that of having been ejected from foreign lands by no means so intelligent as ours, because they have almost ruined society by degrading and perverting the female mind which they presumptuously pretended to train and enlighten ?

But the case on which we have dwelt at so much length, the case of the Female College of Bogota, is not the only instance in which the patriotic statesmen of South America have overthrown the old rules of monastic education

for the express purpose of establishing those of an opposite kind.

Soon after the establishment of an independent government in the republic of Columbia, numerous Convents were suppressed in all parts of its vast territory. Many of them had been long in existence, and had been at once so well endowed, and so entirely under the influence of persons attached to the system on which they were founded, that every opportunity was enjoyed to carry it into operation and to display its appropriate fruits. Those establishments were not in a Protestant country, nor surrounded by a people predisposed to question their utility or to complain of their secrecy. On the contrary, the whole population of the country had been taught from early life to revere them—for, as has before been remarked, the clergy and the nuns were almost the only instructors. When, therefore, the Convents were suppressed, it is not reasonable to suppose that it was done either in consequence of their restricted operation or through unfounded popular prejudice.

The inhabitants of Columbia, like those of the other revolutionized countries of South America, made certain great changes in their system early in their career as free states.

Many of these changes were evidently made because they were thought necessary to the security or existence of the new political condition of the constitution. Among these changes early made by the Columbians, was one reducing the immense incomes of the Bishops to comparatively moderate sums ; the nomination of them by the people, (though subject to the approval of the Pope) ; and the suppression of many of the convents.

Now let us suppose that there had been common schools in that country before the revolution, and that the Republican government had promptly overthrown them and founded Convents for the education of the youth. It would probably have excited North Americans to inquire—For what reason was such a change thought expedient? May there not be something in the convent system of education favourable either to the intellect, the morals, or the religious character of youth ; or at least some other advantage apparently resulting from it, which has recommended it to these ardent friends of Republican freedom? But it happens that no such change was made as we have supposed, but, on the contrary, one of a nature exactly the reverse. Numerous Convents existed ;

and when these were suppressed, instead of establishing others of a more strict and secret description, or instituting a system founded on any of the prominent features of Convents, they passed statutes devoting the funds to the support of *Common Schools*.

And this change was not confined to a small district of country, nor to a limited sphere of operation ; but embraced the whole territory of that extensive republic. It is true that the noble designs of the government were not by any means carried into full effect ; for the sparseness of the population, the prevailing ignorance, the scarcity of teachers, and still more the bloody wars which succeeded, forbade the accomplishment of their wishes : but it is a mere act of justice to say, that the uniform plan of public education, then provided for by the laws of Columbia, was admirable in its designs, extending from parish schools to universities, and embracing a larger extent of surface than any other before or since established.

And let us keep distinctly in view the important fact, that this whole system of education, from institutions of the lowest to those of the highest rank, were freed from the attributes of the monastic system. Not a primary nor se-

condary school, not an academy, college, or university, was allowed to be conducted in secret. Every one was open to visitation. Inspectors were to visit them, reports were to be made at regular intervals; and their whole condition and operations were to be laid before officers of the government, and the general results before the people.

Well may we, North Americans, inquire, wherefore was all this? Why did the most enlightened statesmen of those countries show so determined and total an opposition to the plan and customs of the cloisters? Why did the enlightened and patriotic Santander, while Vice-president of that vast republic, place himself with enthusiasm at the head of this noble plan of universal *public* education, and exert all the influence of his example to have it sustained by his countrymen? Why did he preside at the annual ceremonies of the University in Bogota, encourage the rehearsal of patriotic sentiments, confer the rewards of merit with his own hands, and even embrace the most deserving youth in the presence of a crowded assembly?

Santander knew the character of Convent education; he had had abundant opportunity to judge whether it possessed superior claims to

the confidence of Republicans. The truth is, that he knew it too well to trust it; and his conviction of its dangerous tendency was what rendered him an enthusiast for an opposite system. The same may be said of many of his fellow patriots, who have appeared as the decided opponents of convents, not only in Columbia, but in Mexico and other Southern republics.

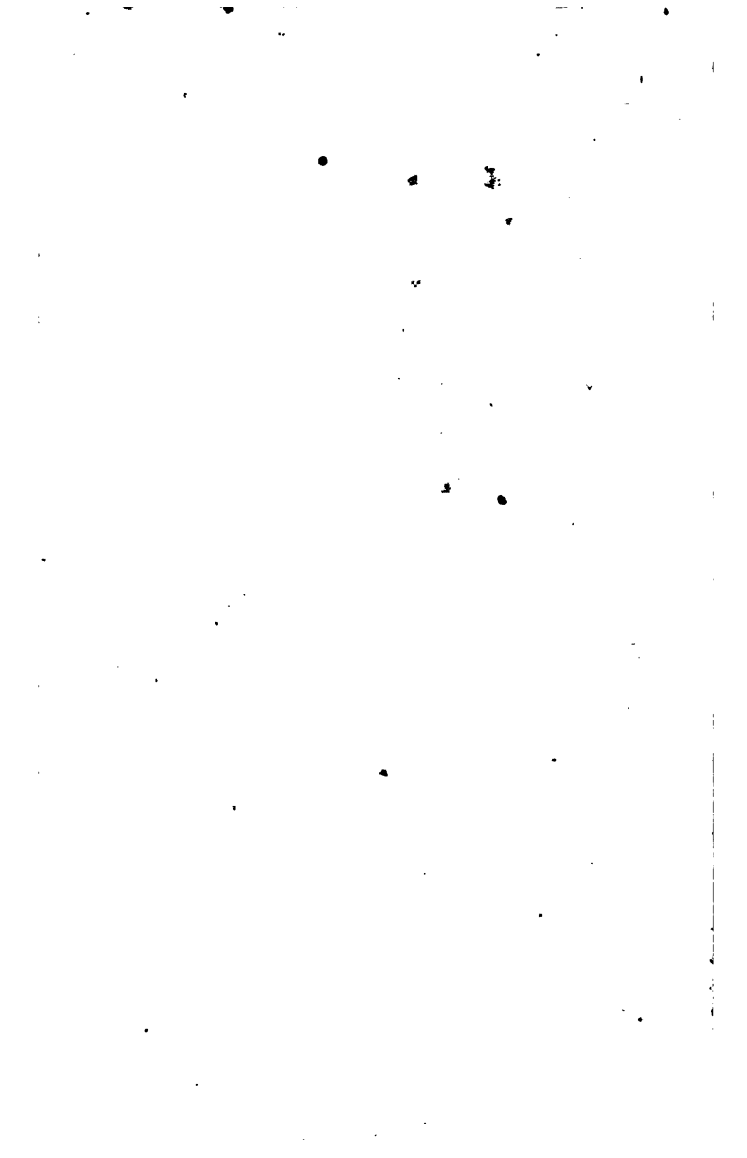
From the history of the last-mentioned country, we might draw instruction not less interesting and decisive in relation to the evil and dangerous tendency of Convent education if space were allowed. Suffice it to say, that the revolution effected in that country, about two years since, by the tergiversation of President Santa Anna, who deserted to the priest's party in a critical hour, was owing in a great degree to the attempt of the liberal party to overthrow the Convents, and to establish on their ruins a system of common schools, colleges, and universities on an enlightened plan, and open to inspection.

And here is one point of so much interest that it deserves more particular notice than we are able now to devote to it, and it is highly important to be borne in mind, viz.—The old, false, and exploded systems of philosophy, ethics,

and natural science, with the limited and shallow course of literary and classical studies, are to a great extent adopted in Roman Catholic institutions when under no influence from society around them. The evil tendencies of such a plan of education have been deeply felt in some of our new American states. The institution of common schools and colleges in Columbia was accompanied by a great reformation in studies, the influence of which has been seen to be highly favourable to the prosperity of the country. When Bolivar, towards the close of his career, was pursuing plans for the establishment of monarchical, or at least highly aristocratical institutions, he overthrew their noble system of education ; and by that act, betrayed his apprehension of its operating contrary to his designs. When, after his death, the three portions of Columbia were erected into independent states, in New Granada the same just and enlightened principles of education were restored ; and, under the Presidency of General Santander, have been adhered to with the most flattering promises of benefit to the nation.

But it is not possible in these pages to pursue this branch of inquiry any farther. It is perhaps sufficient, after the remarks that have

been made to repeat, that the example of the South Americans is pregnant with warning to their brother Republicans of the North, on their long and bitter experience of the deadly effects of Papal Seminaries and Convents, male and female; while the decided opinions they have practically expressed of their dangerous tendency ought neither to be unheeded nor forgotten.







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